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THE ROMAN MISCHIEF-MAKER

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HER TEACHING AND PRACTICE

BY

HUGH E. M. STUTFIELD

"Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them that cause divisions"
ST. PAUL'S EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS, xvi. 17

NEW EDITION
REVISED AND ENLARGED

LONDON
"THE NATIONAL REVIEW" OFFICE
43 DUKE STREET, ST. JAMES'S, S.W.
1920

PRINTED AT
THE COMPLETE PRESS
WEST NORWOOD
LONDON S.E.

TO

MY WIFE AND SON

IN GRATITUDE

FOR MUCH ASSISTANCE

I DESIRE, FURTHER, to make my sincere acknowledgments to the numerous people—some of them entire strangers to me—who of their own accord have sent me helpful books, pamphlets, magazine articles, and other literature, and have given me much valuable advice and information; and to those who, entirely unsolicited by me, have generously offered financial and other aid in the labour of writing this book. I am quite unable adequately to express my indebtedness to these unexpected allies, whose co-operation has been of the greatest service.

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INTRODUCTION

It has been said that fine literature, like fine art generally, is simply the expression of intense feeling. I cannot hope that this book will be deemed fine literature, but I can at least say that it is the offspring of deep feeling and conviction: it comes from the heart. *Facit indignatio versum*; the events and experiences of the last few years compel me to speak out. The impulses which have induced me to write these pages are in no sense ecclesiastical, but social, national, and human: they are wholly unsectarian, the book does not seek to establish any religious theory. The writer has not "got the Vatican on the brain," but is rather of the opinion that too much has been said and written concerning the attitude of the Roman Hierarchy towards the Entente during the war, too little about the hostile sentiments and action of the Church as a whole. His religious views are essentially of the "broad" description; he is in no sense inspired by Protestant prejudice or partisan bias of any kind, and, as he enjoys the privilege of the friendship of staunch Catholics, he is in no way desirous (to quote a newspaper phrase) of "restoring the theological temperature of the days of Titus Oates."

There appears to be a rather general opinion prevalent in this country that many of the questions here dealt with partake of the nature of dead issues.

They are in reality nothing of the sort: they are living and burning issues which to-day vitally affect, not merely nations, but individuals in their private and civic life. The controversy is a very old one, but yet is ever new. The spiritual pretensions and prerogatives of Rome are by no means mere antiquarian *vieux jeu*, interesting only to archæologists: the old "rusty tools" have lately proved themselves sharp enough, as we know to our cost, to inflict some deadly wounds upon the Allies. The Roman Curia has not been insisting on the obedience of the faithful, and enlarging its powers in every possible way, during the last fifty years without having definite ends in view. Mediævalism is still a force to be reckoned with, theology remains a formidable weapon in secular affairs. My business in these pages is not with theology as such, but with theology as it bears on man's general and domestic welfare in this world. If it be said that in discussing theological matters we are reviving ancient animosities, unnecessarily stirring the smouldering embers of religious strife, I can only reply that the fault is not ours. We are not the aggressors in a dispute that has been forced upon us. It has been suggested to me that, while writing this book, I should confine myself to the malpractices of the Roman Church—which appear to be pretty generally recognized—and leave its religion alone. I should have been delighted to follow this well-meant advice, had it been feasible; but the actions of the Church have put such a course out of the question. If, as I fear, portions of the work contain things calculated to jar the susceptibilities of sincere Catholics, I am sorry, but I cannot help it. The responsibility does not rest on

us, but on those who make religion a cloak for turbulence and sedition, for public and private mischief-making. It is the Roman Church in its existing form, the Roman system, rather than true Catholicism, which is the root of the evil.

A Church which, as Mr. Gladstone pointed out forty-five years ago, is for ever making controversial war on other people ought not to feel aggrieved when a little of the truth is told to herself. When she uses what she calls religion (but what we call political clericalism) to plague our public and domestic peace; when she forces theology into the secular domain, making of it an instrument to embarrass a Government and hamper its warlike operations, to provoke conflicts with the State and strife and unhappiness in the home, she must not complain of outspoken protest in return. Mr. Gladstone confessed that he was unable to convey, under the restraints of courtly phrase, any adequate idea of the tremendous mischiefs wrought by the Roman power; and, where Gladstone failed, I can hardly be blamed for not succeeding. When, for instance, Rome employs its own decrees to override the marriage laws of the land which its priests have made their home, when those priests abuse the hospitality we give their Church by violating the ordinary amenities of human intercourse; when they denounce from the altar, in book and pamphlet and newspaper,* decent folk married according to the laws and religious and social usages of their country, as living in concubinage and mortal sin; tells the wives that they are harlots or concubines, and their children bastards—so long as the Church persists in doing these things she

* See chapter viii.

cannot reasonably cry out about "insults." The morbid sensitiveness of Catholics upon the subject of their religion does not prevent them from indulging in these and similar gross affronts against decency and courtesy and humanity, or from outraging the feelings of those who hold different opinions from themselves.

English Protestants often show a natural reluctance to shock the susceptibilities of their Romanist friends by even the smallest manifestation of disapproval. So long, however, as the latter adhere to an organization which has proved itself to be an element of disturbance and disunion, the question arises whether they ought not to be shocked: it might possibly do them good to be treated with small doses of the medicine their Church administers so freely to us. Slowly, but I think surely, a long-suffering public is awakening to the fact that the conduct of the Papacy, and of Romanism in general, is a matter of grave national concern. The war has reminded us of a thing we were in danger of forgetting—namely, that politics and religion are closely, sometimes indissolubly, connected; and that the fate of an empire may depend in some measure on the creeds which its citizens profess. The hostility which the Roman Church has shown towards England, the many overt acts and subterranean plottings by which she has impeded the success of our arms, have forced into prominence religious problems which would otherwise have been left to slumber in peace. A leading Catholic peer, speaking of the Irish bishops' action in opposing conscription (*Times*, April 29, 1918), remarked that it "almost makes me ashamed of the word Catholic." Another staunch Romanist, Mr. Bart Kennedy, used much stronger language. The

Vatican, he said, had betrayed the Church betrayed mankind, betrayed Christ (*Times*, April 24, 1918). Others, extending their field of vision over the whole range of Rome's action during the war, and recognizing that its persistent meddling in temporal affairs has become an international nuisance and a danger to the State, have grown *wholly* ashamed of the word Catholic, and have wisely severed their connexion with the Church.

Such wider vision is very necessary in these days, and for citizens of an empire like ours. Mr. Gladstone's *Tracts* were considered unduly alarmist when they were published, but time has amply vindicated his insight and proved the accuracy of his forecasts. The difficulties and dangers which he apprehended are precisely those with which we are now confronted. If the Church would regain the confidence which non-Catholics were learning to repose in her before the present crisis, she must purge herself of the taint which has now attached itself to her, of sedition and disloyalty to the States under whose ægis her members live and for the most part fairly prosper. English Protestants are rather too apt to judge of Romanism by the comparatively enlightened, tolerant variety which prevails in this country: they forget that in progressive communities like those of England and America "Rome wears a mask," and that her ecclesiastics are for the most part, and for prudential reasons, on their best behaviour. The general atmosphere, here and in the United States, in the realm of mind and spirit is free and clear, and this serves as an antidote to the poison of Ultramontanism. People smile indulgently upon what they call "mediæval

nonsense," because they do not take it seriously: the intolerance of the Dark Ages is for them a danger so remote that they dismiss it from their minds as a thing not worth troubling about. They forget that for the unfortunate inhabitants of countries where the priests' power remains unscathed by the march of intellect, it is an existent and ever-pressing incubus, and for the Empire a source of weakness, or even of danger. Being naturally loth to regard their Catholic friends otherwise than as good and loyal citizens, they shrink from wounding their feelings by criticism of their Church. In England, indeed, such criticism is, in ordinary times, regarded as "bad form"; we mostly keep our religion and our politics in separate compartments. To take a recent example of this tendency, the vital side of the Irish question, its religious side, has been noticeably and persistently shirked of late.

Ultramontanism, or the Catholicism which finds favour among the "black" aristocracy of the Continent, is a plant that seldom finds a congenial soil in our country. British Romanism, especially among our time-honoured nobility, is often in large measure a social or hereditary affair, a feudal survival, a patrician heritage like the family plate, a suitable appurtenance, like the ghost, of the ancient mansion. Such Catholicism has the mellowness of old port; and, as its age is not the least of its recommendations, it naturally regards the new wine of converted Protestantism with suspicion and dislike. Romanism of this robust, independent, and essentially John Bull type lies far outside the stream of general Papist tendencies. For them we have to go to that true home of mediævalism in the

New World, Quebec, to Ireland, and the Latin communities of Europe and South America.

In these countries we find the Roman system working as it loves to work, and as it always has worked wherever it possesses the requisite authority. We there see the priest in the possession of absurdly arbitrary powers, which he is manifestly unfitted to exercise, and doing deadly execution on human welfare and progress. The more enterprising and intelligent people groan under his yoke, but show, by their inability to shake it off, how firmly the Church has settled it on their necks. We are, further, compelled to take cognizance of the fact that the representatives of a religion whose Founder preached peace and goodwill among men are confirmed fomenters of strife; and that a Church which claims to be the repository of divine truth and the infallible exponent of the moral law may, in practice, inculcate a very low standard of ethics. This latter subject will be dealt with at some length in the final chapters of the book.

I would ask my readers to bear in mind that in my criticism of the Catholic religion I am speaking, not of that religion as it might be, but of the Roman Church as it exists to-day. The only Catholicism of which we can now take cognizance is the concrete embodiment of Christian doctrine, in a perverted and degraded form, which is offered us by a Jesuit-controlled Church. Somewhere perhaps, in some as yet unexplored region of the universe, there may exist that ideal Catholicism of which high-minded Romanists, disgusted with the Curia and all its works, vainly dream, and for which the late Father George Tyrrell longed with such sublime fervour and pathetic hope-

lessness. "In spite of the clamorous contradiction of my reason and common sense," he cried, "I cannot even yet bring myself to believe that it is too late; I cannot resign myself to the thought that what has been built up by the labour of so many centuries, at the cost of so much suffering and sorrow, is now doomed to destruction as a mere encumbrance. . . . I will dream my foolish dream of a day—*not perhaps very far removed from the Greek Kalends*" (my italics)—when the Church "will assemble, not to decide and impose points of theology, ethics, and politics under pain of eternal damnation, but to proclaim the gospel of God's Kingdom upon earth as it was proclaimed by Jesus Christ." *

"Your Eminence, I know it right well, yet I will not believe it." The despairing words express what many good Catholics feel in their heart of hearts. Poor Tyrrell was crying for the moon, and he knew it: he was hoping against hope, and trying to believe what he wished to be true, in the face of damning evidence to the contrary. His keen intellect and unclouded vision revealed to him the inherent rottenness of Rome; but he could not, in the short span of life that remained to him, bring himself to take the decisive step that his reason and common sense demanded. His position was a purely anomalous one, and he tried in vain to justify it: had he lived he would probably have followed Loisy and Mivart in their retirement from the Roman fold.

If I introduce thus early the name of Tyrrell into my book, it is because I owe him much that I never can repay, and because I feel that it is on the lines

* *Mediævalism*, p. 187.

indicated in his works that Catholicism, shorn of its evil ways and its "selfish and godless bureaucracy," may ultimately develop. He was a great man, a profoundly religious man, the strongest religious force of recent years. Too honest to disguise his feelings about some of the things dealt with in these pages, he made his protest, paid the penalty of excommunication and deprivation of the Sacraments, and died broken-hearted, but still a sincere believer in the religion, if not in the Church, of his adoption. He was, as I say, a great man, and some day the world will appreciate him at his true worth.

It will be observed in the following chapters that I have, wherever possible, put Catholics in the witness-box against the misdeeds of their Church. Their knowledge is greater than mine, their criticism more deadly, their language much more forcible and picturesque than any that I have at my command. At the same time I have done my best to be careful in the selection of authorities, and to confine myself, as far as possible, to first-class names. The number and variety of the Church's enemies, belonging to all grades and creeds, whom I have encountered in the course of my investigations, and their intense bitterness, have appalled me. There must surely be something very wrong with a system that provokes such antipathy.

THE ROMAN MISCHIEF-MAKER

CHAPTER I

THE SOWER OF DISUNION

" Prim friend with the black serge gown, with the rosary, scapulary, and I know not what other spiritual block-and-tackle—scowl not on me. If in thy poor heart, under its rosaries, there dwell any human piety, awestruck reverence towards the Supreme Maker, devout compassion towards this poor Earth and her sons—scowl not anathema on me, listen to me; for I swear thou art my brother, in spite of rosaries and scapularies; and I recognize thee, though thou canst not me; and with love and pity know thee for a brother, though enchanted into the condition of a spiritual mummy. Hapless creature, curse me not; listen to me, and consider—perhaps even thou wilt escape from mummyhood, and become once more a living soul!" ("Jesuitism," in Carlyle's *Latter-Day Pamphlets*).
" Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them that cause divisions" (St. Paul).

THE Roman Catholic priest is the servant of an organization which has no rival in the art of causing divisions. He deserves our sympathy in that he is also a member of a body of men who are compelled to lead lives which Nature never intended any human being to live, under strange conditions which, as Michelet pointed out, make them contract a curious insensibility and become at once unhappy and dangerous. He is the offspring of a rigid caste-system, which is derived from old Jewish and Pagan sources,

and wholly antipathetic to the true spirit of Christianity; and the particular caste he belongs to is permeated in an exceptional degree with ideas running counter to the main stream of modern life and tendencies. He and his fellow-initiates inevitably gain the characteristics one would expect to find in so spiritually isolated a fraternity; cut off sharply from the rest of the world by faith and sentiment, they become largely soured by their rigid exclusiveness, by thwarted natural instincts, and never-ending contention. Michelet explains in his *Le Prêtre, la Femme, et la Famille,* how celibacy tends to make men cruel and hostile to life: a negative life, one that is functionless in important respects, tends to develop malign instincts; "he who suffers is willing to make others suffer." The worst and most cruel terrorists of the Inquisition were monks.

We must bear these facts in mind if we would gain any correct appreciation of the Latin Church as a factor in the private, communal, and national life of our time. That the Church's principles are distinctly sectarian, that its whole spirit and policy are those of social, political—and I will now add moral—severance, appears to me to be a self-evident proposition. In the Middle Ages, those idyllic centuries, lauded by modern ecclesiastics as the world's Golden Age, the Church was in harmony with the ideas of the time, which were not of a very advanced order; but modern progress, in which the Church has persistently refused to take part, has left her insulated: and I now propose to give reasons for the belief that this insulation affects, not only the Church herself, but the communities of which she forms part. That dogmatic religion in its extremer

forms operates as a disruptive force, both in social and civic affairs, is fairly evident; its staunchest upholders and adherents do not attempt to deny the charge. That the teachings of Christianity's Founder, as literally interpreted by His followers, have brought, not peace, but a sword into the world, is among the commonplaces of theological controversy; and it is argued that Mother Church, when she disturbs our peace, is only carrying out Christ's instructions to the letter, and fulfilling her inevitable destiny. Some Catholic apologists view the fact with regret, some with apparent indifference: none of them deny it. Disunion is recognized as a necessary, though possibly unfortunate, accompaniment of religious fervour. Rivalry, ambition, and isolation are admitted to be the hall-marks of all vigorous sects. Institutional religion never represents the intentions of Christ, but merely the views of some sections of His followers, and each section is, and always must be, at variance with its competitors. Unification is a dream, and, if ever it were capable of realization, would be fatal to the growth and vitality of religion. A patched-up peace could never last; an artificial union, born of logic or supposed mutual interest, would not be a real union, because no single organism can possibly live the life of several other organisms in conjunction with its own. It is also pointed out that the religious idea is centrifugal, and that rivalry is therefore inevitable. Incompatibility of temper in parties joined against their will in an unnatural union finds its natural outcome in divorce.

If, therefore, a Church appears in the rôle of a dissension-sower, a disturber of harmony, it is only

doing what it is bound to do. The sectarian's God is a jealous god, and His worshippers must maintain the exclusiveness which appertains to every privileged caste. The chastisement of error is a duty ; toleration, usually the offspring of indifference and scepticism, is a sin ; intolerance, by which is signified a firm belief in what is called " theological truth," is a necessary development of synoptic teaching. Opinions on matters of dogma are not for the many, whether lettered or unlettered, but for a sanctified *élite*. So far as religions are alive and vigorous, says Tyrrell in *Christianity at the Cross-Roads*, each pushes forward in its own direction, and away from others. The tendency now observable towards reunion among Christian sects is the result of weariness and decay. Faith in a Church is a necessary principle of disruption. Theology was ever a sword of division, and if we look back on the history of religion, and make our induction therefrom, " we may be sure that things will be as they have always been, and that dissension will ever be the law of the religious world." Each religion would eliminate all rivals ; " schism is their very law " ; and, as the Bishop of Carlisle told us the other day, " it is the natural tendency of priests, as of all caste officials, to persecute, suppress, and exterminate their opponents." * Perpetual squabbling is, in short, the natural and inevitable condition of the dogmatically religious world.

These facts have always been more or less tacitly recognized, but the events of the last few years have brought them into a very disagreeable prominence, and the present seems an appropriate time for making a survey of the whole situation. Absolutism in religion,

* The *Nineteenth Century*, February 1919.

no less than in politics, inevitably breeds discord: in the home, the village, and the nation alike, dissension and dogma go hand in hand. If we leave history and make the laws of family life our guide, we must expect, says Tyrrell, to find that the natural "relation between different religions is that of rivalry and hostility, and that there is more reason for such rivalry in the more nearly allied branches of the family."

It has always struck me as a curious thing how the Church of Rome delights in representing family life as a sort of continual cat-and-dog fight; and, to do her justice, we must admit that she often does her best to make it so, and that her efforts are not infrequently crowned with complete success. In her opinion, as Michelet puts it, "marriage is but a warfare: we marry in order to fight," and it is one of the chief merits of the sacerdotal system that there is always a mediator at hand to separate the combatants. This view of the religious life, and of those who pursue it, as one of continuous warfare is very widely held: the Church is a Church militant in more than name, and the little girl who, in an essay upon natural history, spoke of "the wild beasts in the Theological Gardens," wrote wiser than she knew. The Church, with her peculiar views, her secluded and celibate priesthood, is not always a very pleasant neighbour. Man, as Aristotle said, is a πολίτικον ζῶον: he (or she) is a social animal with natural instincts prompting him to marry, have children, expand his mind, and enjoy the free use of his physical and mental functions, together with untrammelled intercourse with his fellow-creatures. Deprive him of these things, cramp his energies and faculties, place him in an atmosphere of strife, and we

must not be surprised when he develops that "unpleasant temper" which Tyrrell and other writers, Catholic and Protestant, agree in regarding as a salient characteristic of the Roman priesthood—just as a dog is made savage by being kept always on the chain, by continually fighting with other dogs, or by being deprived of the bone for which he craves.

This atmosphere of contention coupled with the spirit of particularism, of social and political aloofness, always surrounds the dogmatic Church: it raises that curious, indefinable barrier—that "intangible wall," as a friend of mine aptly calls it—which so many people have recognized as habitually existing between Catholics and those whom the Popes and their advisers call infidels. The ferocious egoism of the Church and of her more extreme supporters establishes "a moral solitude"; she becomes a sort of religious Sinn Fein, a body infected with the poison of separatism and wholly opposed to what continental people call "solidarity." Modern statesmanship seeks to unite; sectarian or dogmatic religion seeks to divide, and is disastrously successful in its efforts. The Roman ecclesiastic regards, and sometimes describes, Protestants and other unbelievers as "pests." The more liberal-minded men look upon us if not exactly as unclean beasts, at any rate as beings apart from, and in some sense inferior to,* those who possess the privilege of an alleged supernatural enlightenment. There is something rather inhuman and unsocial in all this, and its consequences are apparent in all Catholic communities. Old barriers are strengthened, new ones are set up.

* "The sons of God must not espouse the daughters of men,' says a Catholic pamphlet denouncing mixed marriages.

Races and creeds must be kept separate, feuds aggravated, isolation encouraged, mixed marriages forbidden or frowned upon, national spirit checked—all possible means taken to prevent union or assimilation.

The priest's life is, as I have stated, often a sad and lonely one, but the pathos of his unhappy, if self-imposed, situation must not blind us to the evil which he works by the misuse, on his own initiative, or as the submissive tool of a reactionary autocracy, of the tremendous powers with which he is entrusted. When, in the latter half of the last century, the Jesuits completed their capture of the Vatican, shrewd observers foresaw that trouble would inevitably follow. Mr. Gladstone forty-three years ago drew attention, not only to the tendency, but to the design, of Vaticanism to disturb civic society and to become a source of weakness and disloyalty in the State; and few people will now contend that his warnings were not justified. The Jesuits have been described as the stormy petrels of politics; and of the modern Papacy the Jesuit can now truly say, "I am the State." Nearly every European country has been compelled in its time to take protective measures against the Order's subterranean plotting and intrigue, its disruptive tendencies, and persistent efforts to clog the machinery of the State. How successful those efforts are the Allies to-day know only too well. The eternal troubles and international complications for which their intrigues have been responsible will be described in subsequent chapters, but it may be mentioned here that even the Popes themselves at times found their conduct unendurable. Innocent XI anathematized the casuists (of whom the larger proportion were Jesuits) and their

abominable doctrines. They greatly annoyed that scholarly pontiff, Benedict XIV, who was driven to take strong disciplinary measures against them. Thirty-two years later, Clement XIV by his Brief, *Dominus ac Redemptor,* suppressed the Order for being, as it then was, and has been ever since, a private and public mischief-maker, a general world-nuisance. That other weak Pope, Pius VII, re-established the Jesuits in 1814, after which they succeeded in capturing the Church and authoritative Romanist journalism. The Clerical-Nationalists in France, like the Vatican journalists of Rome, have long been the bitter enemies of England, of her free opinions and institutions, and her religion. They attacked us savagely in their journals twenty years ago, and preached a *jehad* against our Empire. The Jesuits have maintained their position ever since, and monarchs and statesmen, suffering from their presence, have been forced to recognize how true is the saying that a political Church is a thorn in the flesh of Society. The advocates of maintaining diplomatic relations with Rome, and permitting the Vatican to keep a Papal envoy in England, would do well to bear these things in mind.*

"There shall be no union, no friendly and kindly garden of peace, no real nationality," where certain types of Roman mischief-maker hold sway, as a Catholic Gaelic-Leaguer in Ireland reminded us: the Church still remains faithful to the old method of governing by dividing. "A successor of the Fisherman," she is ever a patient fisher in troubled waters. She thrives on the State's misfortunes; and, as might have been expected, the stormy petrels of clericalism

* See Appendix I.

have lately been busy foraging amongst the wreckage caused by the war. Cardinal Bourne employed the familiar tactics with much skill and plausibility in his recent politico-ecclesiastical manifesto, disguised as a Lenten Pastoral, entitled *The Nation's Crisis*. From this somewhat inflammatory document we learned that a new order of things, new social conditions, are about to arise, in which the Catholic Church will have " her own special duty to perform and her own part to play "—and, it might have been added, her own fish to fry. He depicted in lurid colours the woes of " that definitely servile class," the wage-earners (whose cause the Church has consistently opposed in the past, and who have not recently been showing any marked signs of suffering or servility) groaning under the yoke of a greedy plutocracy. Many other phrases and arguments, calculated to promote social disaffection and embitter class feeling, were employed; our present sorrows were represented as being only the natural consequence of an infidel world shaking off the chains upon mind and spirit imposed by a benevolent theocracy in that ideal Middle Age, before " the Catholic voice had been silenced in the land," when faith was paramount, and everything was as it ought to be, from the cleric's standpoint. There was an appeal to Catholics, frequently repeated, to " seize the opportunity " which present conditions afford of making the Church's claims heard, and, " out of the sorrows and bitterness and tragedy of this time of war," of building up a new England—in which, of course, Rome will have come by its own.

This policy of trying to make capital for the Papacy out of a nation's misfortunes has been pursued in

every European country and at all times; but the Church, as we have shown, accepts her rôle of general mischief-maker, disturber of domestic peace and tranquillity, with perfect composure and as part of her inevitable destiny. If anybody complains he is met by the well-worn plea that Christ came to send, not peace, but a sword into the world, and that sufferers must put up with any trifling inconveniences which may ensue from the Church's faithful observance of His precepts. Whether Christ ever spoke the terrible, but now only too familiar, words attributed to Him in Matthew x. 34, or Luke xiv. 26, is a question which many able commentators * have answered in the negative. They certainly sound strange in the mouth of a Prince of Peace whose special mission it was to bring peace on earth and goodwill to all mankind. We know, too, that texts of Scripture were frequently tampered with, that alterations by way of additions, erasures, etc., were made in the MSS. upon which our present New Testament is based. St. John, for instance, in the last verses but two of the Bible (Revelations xx. 18, 19) invoked all the maledictions of heaven and plagues of earth upon any man who dared to take such liberties with *his* text! The verses in St. Matthew and St. Luke may have been added by some quarrelsome cleric who wished to invent an excuse for the trouble he was causing; and the frequency with which the verses in question are quoted by Catholics to-day in defence of the Church's mischief-making, lends some probability to the theory. In any case, sufferers from Roman meddling will not

* See the notes on these passages in Loisy's *Évangiles Synoptiques*, and C. G. Montefiore's *The Synoptic Gospels*.

suck much comfort out of the clerical argument, and we can only say that, if Mother Church continues to assert her power and right to create public and private dissension, there will be wigs on the green ; and it is by no means certain that she will emerge victorious, and without some of her tail-feathers missing, from the conflict that must inevitably ensue.

The crisis through which the world has recently been passing afforded Rome an unrivalled chance of displaying its peculiar talents for making trouble. The hierarchy and priesthood made full use of their opportunities—but an account of the Church's special activities in relation to the War must be reserved for a separate chapter.

CHAPTER II

THE ROMAN CHURCH AND THE WAR

"Mischief, thou art afoot" (*Julius Cæsar*, iii, 2, 261).
"Le cléricalisme, voilà l'ennemi" (Gambetta).

THE great world-conflagration to which Cardinal Manning looked forward * with such prim complacence as the surest means of restoring the Church's temporal power, and reinstating Christ's Vicar in his rightful place, has come and gone. It has gone, leaving behind it a trail of perhaps ten million corpses, and many more broken hearts, together with ruined lives and misery and desolation unspeakable, and dragging civilization,

> With hideous ruin and combustion, down
> To bottomless perdition.

The results of this "terrible scourge of Continental war," this "deluge of blood," which Manning declared to be the only solution of the Papal difficulty, have hardly fulfilled the Vatican's expectations: but some at least of the Church's magnates can say that they did their utmost to secure victory for the forces of reaction. The coming of peace, the lapse of time, maturer reflection, and additional evidence now enable us to view these tremendous events more dispassionately, with a clearer vision, and in a truer perspective. Conjecture concerning certain matters that were

* See *The Vatican Decrees*, by W. E. Gladstone, p. x.

previously shrouded in obscurity has given place to something approaching certitude. Many people had an intuition in the early days of the conflict that there were forces working secretly underground in conjunction with the Central Powers, and against the Allies; and they formulated an indictment against the Roman Church which, though lacking proof at the time in certain respects owing to imperfect information, has proved to be remarkably correct upon the whole. The Church, it was said—and many Catholics of light and leading, and of all classes, endorsed the charge to a greater or less extent—was siding with our enemies. The Vatican, with a large and influential Party-following, was never really neutral in the great struggle, but furtively, though actively, espoused the cause of militarist autocracy. It made itself the instrument of German policy, was the centre and inspiration of much enemy intrigue, with disastrous results to the Entente. It is not denied that an abominable plot, resulting in the blowing up of two Italian battleships and other injury to the Allies, was hatched by an inmate of its walls in close relation with the Supreme Pontiff. It was held to be largely responsible, whether by accident or design, for the insidious propaganda which undermined the loyalty of Italian troops and brought about the Isonzo *débâcle*. It connived at, if it did not originate, scurrilous attacks in clerical newspapers against the Entente in general and England in particular. The Pope was charged with sins of commission and omission. Head of the most powerful religious organization in the world, he steadily refused to utter any public or effective protest against specific crimes, methods of barbarism, and violations of

international law of which the Central Powers have been proved guilty. By his silence he betrayed the sacred trust reposed in him under his claim to be the divinely appointed and supreme interpreter and defender of eternal law. The peace he suggested in his famous Note was a German and anti-Ally peace, and the Note itself bears internal evidence of German inspiration. Catholic clerics and laymen in neutral and Allied countries worked against the Entente by every means in their power. In Ireland and Quebec, the only two large Romanist territories of the Empire, the mass of the Catholic population were either actively disloyal or at best half-hearted in our cause. Australian ecclesiastics followed suit by preaching sedition. To sum up, in every country where the power and influence of the Papacy prevail we found the mighty forces of dogmatic religion actively arrayed in opposition to the Allies.

The evidence on which these accusations are based is direct and indirect. Here and there it is not altogether convincing, and certain charges which are at present only matters of more or less justifiable suspicion, notably that of Vatican * complicity in sundry matters, were erroneously taken as proved; but more than enough remains to support a formidable indictment. Let us briefly summarize the more salient facts and examine the inferences which may reasonably be drawn from them, beginning with the case of the

* People are too apt to identify the Church with the Pope or the Vatican, which in reality is only a small part of the Church. What the Pope is saying or thinking is usually much less important than what the priests and their flocks are doing. Marsilius of Padua said in 1325 that the Church consisted of *all Christians*. (Lord Bryce's *Holy Roman Empire*, p. 221.)

notorious Monsignor Gerlach. Our newspapers, for some reason, did not give this case half the prominence which its importance deserved, and which it received in Catholic journals, with the result that not one Protestant in ten appeared to have even so much as heard of Monsignor Gerlach and his plots. I will therefore shortly retell the story. This Austrian or, some say, Bavarian prelate was the Papal Master of the Robes, the friend and confidant of Benedict XV, who in December 1916 sent him on a special mission to *France* as the bearer of three Cardinals' hats for *French* bishops! Early in 1917 a brilliant *coup* by the Roman police resulted in Gerlach being revealed as the author—together with a business agent of Vatican prelates and other ecclesiastics, the editor of a clerical journal, and three others—of a series of intrigues and plots, extending over a year and a half, which resulted, amongst other things, in the destruction of two Italian battleships, the *Benedetto Brin* and the *Lionardo da Vinci*. He fled the country before he could be arrested, but was found guilty in his absence of high treason, espionage, and other crimes, and sentenced to penal servitude for life. The Court handsomely exonerated the Holy See from all complicity in these plots, which a serious Catholic is reported to have described as "the worst betrayal since Judas." It should be observed, however, that no process was taken by the Pope against the traitor Roman prelate, though some action of this kind was generally expected. Moreover, there is a Latin proverb which says that a man must be judged by the company he keeps, and I submit that this Gerlach episode demands some explanation from the Pope which has not hitherto been forthcoming.

How came it about that Benedict XV, himself partly Austrian by birth, kept this shady Teutonic adventurer (though most Popes have shady associates; see p. 72) —an enemy subject—as his associate and right-hand man after war was declared, maintaining with him an intimate relationship and bestowing on him a confidence which was so grossly abused? Further, is it wholly unreasonable, in face of what went on in Italy during the two months preceding the Isonzo disaster, and of the known political bias of the Pope's entourage, to suppose that there may have been other people besides Gerlach about his august person who were engaged in similar intrigues? Cardinal Gasparri, the Papal Secretary, denies that the Vatican was implicated in the disruptive propaganda, now admitted to be of Romanist origin, designed to corrupt Italian soldiers; but as the Pope presumably did not suspect Gerlach, who for eighteen months was successfully plotting under his very nose, he obviously is not in a position to answer for the integrity of all his other numerous subordinates.

It would appear that the Pope cannot plead ignorance of his friend's real character. Long before 1917 Gerlach was known as a clerical *roué* and man-about-town, a speculator, and a violent Pan-German; and his appointment as Chamberlain caused much searching of hearts. Gerlach, wrote Dr. E. J. Dillon (a Catholic) in the *Fortnightly Review* for July 1915, "is one of the most compromising associates and dangerous mentors that any sovereign ever admitted to his privacy." Nevertheless, while certain harmless foreigners "were admonished to quit Italy as subjects of a belligerent enemy, the Pope covered the Austrian plot-weaver with his protecting wing," and allowed him to "com-

municate in cipher with the band of Austrians and Germans" watching in Lugano—with the natural results that transpired in 1917.

At the outset of the war the Vatican Party, as is now generally admitted, were intensely hostile to the Entente. The Vatican, says Dr. Dillon, and the Pope personally were energetic opponents of Italy's armed intervention; the "Blacks" strove might and main to keep her out of the fray. They not only hoped, but firmly believed, that Germany would win, and some of them acted in accordance with their wishes. Four Dominican Fathers at Bari were condemned to be shot soon after Italy's entry into the conflict, for spying and treasonable communication with the enemy. Spying apparatus was discovered in at least one monastery, and under the altar of a church. Mr. Richard Bagot has described the campaign of slander and vituperation against England and the Allies carried on by Roman papers with the knowledge of the Vatican and the sanction of the clerical parties, the propaganda by leaflets and pamphlets distributed through clerical agencies, and the methods employed to corrupt slightly wounded soldiers about to return to the Front, and the pages of the *Tablet* contain much that confirms his statements. I have myself been told, for instance, that the Isonzo disaster was brought about by clerical intrigue acting on ignorant, priest-ridden southern troops; and the *Tablet* of September 15, 1917, quoted the case of the *Corriere del Friuli*, a Catholic newspaper published at Udine, then the headquarters of the Italian Army. This paper told the soldiers that the Pope in his Note had expressed a fervent desire for peace, and it practically advised them to comply with his wishes

by abandoning their trenches—which they did, in the most effectual manner possible. The Pope ordered the journal to cease publication, and there were other papers which the military authorities had to suppress.

Colonel John Buchan, in *Nelsons' History of the War,* shows how an appeal promoted by the Central Powers was insidiously directed both to the ignorant Catholic peasantry and to the extreme Socialists of the cities, and worked havoc with the Italian *moral.* If Austria attacked, it was said, it was only to enforce the views of the Vatican and establish the brotherhood of the proletariat. One example of this clerical intrigue has already been given in the case of the *Corriere del Friuli.* From the *Times* of November 15, 1917, we learn that an article in the *Unità Cattolica,* written jointly by the editor appointed at the wish of the Pope (who is more closely connected with Roman journalism than is generally supposed) and the Cardinal Archbishop of Florence, stated that it was not the Pope who was an advocate of German ideas, but that it was the "yeast of subversive Ultramontane ideas which poisoned the heart and perverted the mind of those unfortunates who failed in their sacred duty" (in the Isonzo trenches). After this very frank admission of clerical responsibility for this great disaster, it may seem superfluous to say more, but I prefer to complete my statement of the case. To appreciate the full significance of the *Unità*'s admission we must remember that the Jesuits or Ultramontanes (they are practically the same thing nowadays) rule the Church—*are* the Church in its governing capacity. The *Corriere d'Italia,* an authoritative exponent of Roman policy, told us that the loyalty of Italian Catholics rests on their

religion. A somewhat insecure foundation, I venture to suggest, because, whenever the interests of motherland and Mother Church conflict, the latter has the first claim on the devout Catholic's allegiance: and the paper proceeded to prove my contention by attacking England venomously and playing Germany's game by endeavouring to sow dissension amongst the Allies. The "hyena of the Vatican" (the Italian nickname for the great Jesuit organ, the *Civiltà Cattolica*) also bared its teeth and snarled fiercely, in its usual fashion, at Britain and British policy, in an article full of calumnies and misrepresentations which earned the condemnation of the *Tablet*.* The *Tablet* also informs us that the Roman clerical Press has been at its old game, during the past summer, of attacking England and raising the bogy of Protestantism.†

It will be seen, therefore, that there is ample confirmation from Catholic and other sources of the assertion that the Italian troops were demoralized through clerical influences, and that the propaganda which brought about such disastrous results was largely based on the Pope's Peace Note. In judging the Note and its consequences, we must read it in conjunction with the reports of the interpretations placed on it by the clerical parties and Press. Hopes were held out to the people, impressions subtly conveyed by

* The *Tablet*, however, did not give us the *Civiltà's* nickname, or state the fact that it occupies a unique and privileged position in Roman journalism. By a Brief of Pius IX it was proclaimed in 1866 to be the special organ for teaching the Church's true doctrine; and the writers on its staff were formed into a special corporation, *in perpetuity*, as an organic institution of the Church. The "hyena's" pronouncements, therefore, have a more than ordinary significance.

† The *Tablet*, June 14 and August 2, 1919.

the commentators, that a peace might be arranged on the basis of the Note whereby Italy would secure substantial benefits, such as the cession of Trieste and the Trentino; and these suggestions took deep root in the public mind. The Note, it was said, though nominally addressed to "interposed persons" (the rulers of the various States) was really addressed to the soldiers, and they ought, therefore, to leave their trenches. The intrigues, moreover, were by no means confined to the rank and file.

Colonel Buchan tells us (page 34) that peace propaganda was rife amongst the troops, and the country full of danger signals. He shows how the Note, especially the phrase about "useless slaughter," was used to convey the impression that the Pope was on the side of the defeatists. The results were absolutely disastrous: when the German divisions attacked they found "treachery and folly in the Italian ranks. There were strange tales of men running out with white flags to greet their Teuton 'comrades,' and being shot down or made prisoners in hundreds." A few days later the Second Army, weakened with discontent and treason, "had become a fugitive rabble."

"*The Times*" *History of the War* (May 7, 1918), recording the events prior to Caporetto, describes how speedily the evil effects of the Note, which at first were only temporary, made themselves felt. The Pope, the writer says, "became the unwitting instrument of German manœuvres." His personal motives may have been excellent, but good intentions often pave the road to mischief, and the intentions of many of his subordinates were anything but good. We do not know, we never may know, the motives which prompted

the Pope's Peace Note. What is absolutely certain is that the Germans found it extremely useful, and exploited it to the full. The Clericals argued that the "Note had no ill effect, but the argument is false. There was a moment of anxiety and uncertainty, and if that moment passed" (for the time) ". . . . the fact remains. The actual dates pertinent to the argument are as follows," and these dates are highly significant. A forecast of the Note was published on August 14; the text appeared on the 16th, and at dawn on the 18th the great Italian offensive opened. Though parts of the Italian Army were temporarily shaken by the Vatican's action, the troops fought bravely as a whole; but the poison had been distilled, as Italian officers and men well knew at the time, and two months later the Caporetto *débâcle* proved how thoroughly it had done its work. "The general effect of the Pope's Note, which was not made in Germany,* but almost might have been, was deplorable," says Mr. Edward Marshall, the well-known American journalist, in a dispatch to the *Daily Chronicle*. "Men who had fought bravely in the Italian Army before it was issued stopped fighting when they thought the Pope had bade them to do so," because they thought "the Pope's Austrian affiliation, reputed to be powerful, gave to his Note real Austrian authority, and that also it must express the will of the German Centre, or Catholic Party."

* This is by no means certain. The *Spectator* of January 24, 1920, says that the Peace Note, "as we know from Czernin, Erzberger, and others, was intended to help the German Powers by taking advantage of the supposed weariness of the Allies."

Erzberger, assisted by a gentleman with an English name, engineered the Italian propaganda.

The Socialists joined hands with the clerics in the working out of Germany's carefully prepared plans; there were traitor munitioneers from Turin who were involved in the final mischief, but it was the religious influence that proved the decisive factor in the process of corrupting the troops. When Italy declared war the ordinary Catholic was patriotic enough, but the Vatican Party, with its following of smart ladies, political schemers, German propagandists, clerical journalists and cartoonists, were busy, as usual, making mischief against the Allies. They carped assiduously at the Entente and its cause, savagely attacked Great Britain, and spread anti-English calumnies abroad, while the priests in the villages, in conjunction with the Socialists in the towns, did excellent work for the defeatists and the Teutonic Powers. Whether Socialism or the clerics must bear the larger portion of the blame is a point that yet remains to be determined, but it is absolutely certain that religion was actively and effectually employed as a means of corrupting the troops. There was an organized clerical conspiracy, in which Vatican people took part, to destroy the *moral* of the Italian Army, and to place Italy under the heel of the Central Powers.

The women were among the most powerful influences used for weakening the soldiers' resolution, and their natural hatred of war was fanned to the utmost. Mr. Marshall says that the Socialists "worked them up to a fine frenzy, which was hard to counteract"; but we all know that a priest's influence upon what Mr. Marshall calls "ignorant Italian womanhood," or any other womanhood, is worth a dozen Socialists. A very competent and studiously impartial observer,

Mr. G. M. Trevelyan,* who is careful not to wound, unnecessarily, Catholic susceptibilities, thinks that the Church did little *direct* harm in the army (this does not appear to be the general view), but much in the country behind. Anti-English fables, along with other disintegrating propaganda, were sedulously circulated by priests and clerical journalists among the peasantry, as Catholics admit. The chaplains were sound enough as a body, no doubt, but the clericals were very busy behind the lines, and the letters of the soldiers' wives, telling how the priests declared on the Pope's authority that there would be peace in a month, told on the men's *moral*. The Italians were magnificent material, says Mr. Trevelyan, but, being hopelessly uneducated (for which they have largely to thank their Church) they did not understand, like the English or French or American soldiers, what they were fighting for. The traitor elements at Caporetto—disaffected Turin munitioneers and priest-ridden southern peasants—may have been few in number; but, as Mr. Trevelyan points out, Caporetto was the key to the whole strategic position. Meanwhile, as the *Tablet* told us, in the country districts the ignorant peasantry were "on their knees before the Madonna, thanking her for the peace the Pope had *already* brought; others were saying that if peace had not yet come it was all the fault of that old witch England." †

In estimating the effect of the religious influence in deteriorating the *moral* of the soldiers it must be remembered that authoritative Jesuit writers like Father Gury, whose *Compendium* has been appointed,

* *Scenes from Italy's War*, p. 27.
† The *Tablet*, September 15, 1917.

in Catholic seminaries in all lands, as the standard manual of Moral Theology, furnishes disloyal persons with all sorts of effective means of checkmating Government action. Soldiers may find in these books convenient excuses for deserting from the colours, or otherwise shirking their duties; and the Italian priests were only acting on principles approved by the Church. Gury says (I, 472) that a soldier who serves in an unjust war is responsible for every act of injury perpetrated by himself individually, and proportionately for the total injury wrought by the army; and he proceeds to supply the soldier with pleas that make it easy for him to desert with a clear conscience. A deserter need not return to the colours if he thinks (he is apparently to be the judge) that he will incur great risk to his salvation—if, for instance, adequate provision is not made for the confessional—if he expects to be severely punished on his return; or if the war is an unjust one. Gury's works, like other Catholic manuals, contain many maxims subversive of military discipline or calculated to weaken allegiance to the State.

The results of the Caporetto retreat were catastrophic. The war was greatly prolonged; thousands of valuable lives were lost, much territory overrun and ravaged, and incalculable damage done. We, and the French, already hard pressed by our powerful enemy, had to dispatch a large number of troops—good troops, too—and war material to our stricken Italian Ally. The gaps in our already sorely weakened armies on the Western Front had to be filled with brave, but insufficiently trained, men and immature lads. Ludendorff, heavily reinforced from the Russian Front, saw his

chance and took it. Surprised in the fog, and greatly outnumbered, the attenuated British lines broke before the German onset at St.-Quentin in March 1918, and once more the Entente found itself involved in the gravest calamity. All these things must be reckoned in the account which the Allies will have to make with Rome over its attitude during the war. I do not for a moment suggest that the Church was wholly to blame for the Isonzo disaster and its terrible consequences, but her intrigue contributed no small share to the disruptive propaganda which brought it about; her responsibility for the misfortunes which have befallen the Allies was largely increased, and one more proof was afforded of the fact that a political Church is a danger to the nation.

The tone and temper of the Vatican Party, and of the Pope's entourage, are indicated by many things. There was, first of all, the highly discreditable Gerlach episode; the refusal to permit a Requiem Mass to be celebrated in Rome for murdered Belgian priests; the attitude of the Papal Press; the official solemnization of the Kaiser's birthday; the perpetual presence in the Vatican of Austrian and German Ministers; the close association of the Papal Nuncio in Belgium, Monsignor Tacci-Pacelli, with the Germans in that country (he left Havre for Brussels so as to be near them); the Austro-German affiliation of representatives of the Holy See in enemy countries; the activities in Rome of "the propagandist arch-plotter," Erzberger; and many other things. The Vatican's desire to please the Central Powers was shown by its specially exempting Germany and Hungary from the extraordinary *Ne Temere* and *Motu Proprio* decrees

of Pius X, which have caused so much commotion in Ireland.

Even so mighty and thrilling an event as the expulsion of the Turk from the Holy City of Jerusalem caused but doubtful joy in the Papal precincts. "*Gerusalemme liberata*, and not a bell rang in Rome. . . . *Gerusalemme liberata*, and St. Peter's is silent." So the *Tablet's* Rome correspondent mournfully recorded in his letter of December 13, 1917. The banner of the Cross at last waved once more over the Holy Sepulchre; but "the necessary caution of the Vatican" and of Christianity's Arch-Priest forbade even a modest celebration until a week had elapsed. Faced with a very delicate situation, His Holiness showed the tact and adroitness which we were entitled to expect from so accomplished a diplomatist, and skated over the thinnest possible ice with a lightness and dexterity which compelled our admiration. The Pope would like to go into transports of joy at so auspicious an occasion, but "over our gladness there is still a cloud: the liberators of the Holy Sepulchre" do not owe allegiance to Rome. He therefore indulges in no unseemly jubilations over the success of our British arms in their high endeavour, but expresses, through the mouth of his Cardinal Secretary, a chastened satisfaction at the thought that the age-long prayers of the Fathers have at length been granted by the ending of the Turk's hateful domination. Due consideration was not here shown, perhaps, for the feelings of the Kaiser's friend and associate in arms, Enver Pasha; but this was hardly to be expected. On the other hand, the Imperial pietist of Potsdam—who claimed to have in the Most High an unconditional and avowed Ally on

whom he could safely depend—was probably, if not exactly pleased, at least not grievously vexed, by the pronouncement of his other *fidus Achates* in the Vatican.

The pro-German interests of the Papacy are indeed almost too obvious to require enumeration. As head of an absolutist Church, whose main concern is with politics, it may have been the duty of the Pope, in his political capacity, to back the absolutist Central Powers. The vital principle of authoritarianism in temporal and spiritual affairs was at stake : democracy and infidelity had found their champions in the Entente. The Catholic Centre was a preponderant influence in German politics which was well worth supporting. Austria was the one great Catholic Empire left in the world ; and its destruction is a blow from which Rome can hardly recover. The fidelity of many millions of Catholic Slavs is endangered : all hopes of a revival of the Holy Roman Empire are dissolved. The statement, frequently and authoritatively made, that the Kaiser promised the Pope a restoration of his temporal power, in return for his support during the war, may be an exaggeration ; that an understanding of some kind existed between the two is more than probable. As I say, from the political standpoint Benedict XV was probably bound to support Germany. What we complain of is that he pretended to be our friend, or at least a perfectly impartial looker-on at the titanic struggle.

The real Vatican view is set forth, with considerable *naïveté*, in a pamphlet signed *Benedetto Governa* (Benedict is the Ruler), said to have been written by one of the most intimate confidants of the Pope, and quoted

by Mr. Alfred Fawkes in the *Contemporary Review* for March 1919, page 299. It was France, the writer said, who was unjust and in the wrong. She had trodden divine and human law alike under foot by her legislation against the religious Orders. It was England and France who had brought trouble upon Belgium and, for their own profit, had bought up the Government of that unhappy country, and put its priests, its women, its children to the sword. "War is war; and, had the Belgian priests kept within the limits of Christian prudence, they would not have been killed." "The German bishops see in the war the punishment due to sin"; and the writer evidently agreed with their view. "Is it not in your opinion possible that the victory of France would be the victory of impiety and immorality? A victory for your hybrid Allies—England, Italy, America—the eternal enemies of the Church?" The poor French bishops who were thus addressed in this illuminating document were in a quandary, as people who owe a divided allegiance often are during national crises. They were good French patriots, and they were good Churchmen—of a Roman Church which since the death of Leo XIII has always worked with the Central Powers.*

The Pope persisted in asserting that he was absolutely neutral, and his Cardinal Secretary told us in 1915 that His Holiness had "peremptorily imposed the strictest and most absolute impartiality" on the

* The position of the French Church is a somewhat anomalous one. Gallicanism is nominally dead, but its shade still haunts the scenes of its former triumphs; and the French bishops know, as well as we do, that Rome worked for a German victory. The enemies of the French Church, says that unquestioned authority, Mr. J. E. C. Bodley, who is certainly not hostile to Romanism, "had an ally in the Vatican."

Catholic Press. The citations I have given above form a sufficient comment on this latter statement, and it may be well to repeat that the Pope's connexion with, and authority over, the Romanist Press is very considerable. The motives of the Press were clear enough. The *Tablet* (which throughout the war displayed a sturdy patriotism deserving of all praise) stated that there was a widespread belief, which in at least one instance was proved to be well-founded, that some Catholic newspapers in Italy were subsidized by Germany, and the Holy Father's orders were not always observed. Let us admit frankly that the Pope's position was by no means an easy one; his interests obviously inclined him to the side of our enemies, while his intensely pro-German environment rendered genuine impartiality extremely difficult. The neutrality of the Vatican was of a very doubtful quality, and it is flatly impugned in several quarters. Two "remarkable articles which appeared in the *Revue de Paris* (October 15, and November 1, 1918) under the title of 'La Politique de Benoît XV,' make it clear that Rome was not neutral. The Pope was an active ally of the Central Powers; and must share in whatever obloquy attaches to them by reason of their inception and conduct of the war." * Let me add that we learn from an official Bavarian document, published in *Le Journal* of April 29, 1919, that the Vatican was egging on the Central Powers before hostilities were opened. Baron Ritter, Bavarian Minister to the Holy See, telegraphed to his Government on July 26, 1914, that the Pope (Pius X) approved of Austria taking "energetic action" against Serbia. The Roman Curia, said the

* *Contemporary Review*, March 1919, p. 296.

Baron, revealed in its declarations its dread of Panslavism.

The conclusions at which the writer in the *Revue de Paris* (a well-known man) arrived, and which were supported by documentary and other evidence, were as follows: (1) the Pope, regarding the war simply as a vulgar rivalry of ambitions, "refused to admit the criminality of the violation of Belgian neutrality; and would not allow either that the Allies had any advantage over their opponents in the matter of justice, or that the methods of war adopted by Germany differed morally from theirs; (2) that, in consequence, as he considered our ambitions more dangerous and more tenacious than those of Germany, he did not scruple to urge the United States to prohibit the exportation of arms and munitions of war; and to use his influence, not only with neutrals to dissuade them from joining the Allies, but over Catholics in the Allied countries to induce them to break up the Alliance, and to detach themselves from the common bond." * These statements have never, to the best of my belief, been authoritatively denied; and Mr. Fawkes' article was not published until more than four months after those in the French review appeared.

The fault of Benedict XV throughout the present crisis has been that he maintained a much stricter neutrality in the great conflict between right and wrong than in the purely secular quarrel between the Entente and the Central Powers; and his silence on the moral issue, his deplorable failure to act as circumstances demanded, to make any effective protest or to take any effective action against clearly

* *Contemporary Review*, March 1919, p. 297.

proved atrocities, will be remembered against him when history records her verdict upon the whole case. Catholics urge that the head of a vast international organization could not take sides in an international conflict, or sit in judgment upon the rights and wrongs of such a huge and complicated problem. "It would have been highly impolitic for him to interfere," they say. Possibly: but we expect a man who sets himself up as supreme judge in the moral sphere, as supreme arbiter in things spiritual and temporal, to prove himself something more than a mere opportunist politician. The Vicar of Christ, God's Vice-Gerent here below, ought surely to be actuated by some grander motive than mundane expediency or self-seeking. A man who tells us that he is the Avenger of Eternal Law, the inspired mouthpiece of the Holy Ghost, cannot be judged by the standards applied to ordinary humanity. He must show himself to be made of sterner stuff than the man in the street. The Papacy abdicated its functions when it disregarded Belgium's agonized appeal, added to that of civilized humanity; it had its chance in 1914, and, having failed to take it, must now pay the penalty of a disgusted world's contempt. The Pope cannot have it both ways—claim to be a kind of god, and at the same time ask to be measured by ordinary human tests. He must do one of two things; drop his extravagant pretensions, or else give the world some visible token of their validity. A potentate who makes an assertion of supernatural attributes and prerogatives, which he is unable to justify either in theory or practice, would be well-advised to shed a burden which is manifestly too heavy for him. His clerical champions of the

pamphlet and Press, in their somewhat half-hearted, sometimes contradictory, and terribly specious pleadings, showed but a poor faith in the goodness of their case. They cited isolated protests* addressed by the Pope to individuals (the protest against the bombing of Padua was a late exception), and told us that he did a great deal to alleviate distress. This is true; but the world looks for loftier attributes than mere kindness of heart in the earthly representative of Divine Majesty and Justice.

"It is your task, Holy Father, to convert the men of whom President Wilson finally despaired." So said M. L'Abbé Sertillanges in his great sermon in the Madeleine; but the job had no attractions for His Holiness. "Neutrality" forbade it; to speak out against atrocity and the violation of human and divine law might offend the Germanic Powers, and so (as one able writer quaintly put it) "endanger the salvation of millions of souls." Yet would the Pope do well to remember that his illustrious compatriot, Dante, found a special and highly unpleasant inferno, full of wasps and hornets, and other venomous creatures, reserved for all such as were neutral in the eternal war between good and evil:

> "Nor yet were true to God, but for themselves
> Were only . . . Fame of them the world hath none,
> Nor suffers; mercy and justice scorn them both."
> *Inferno*, canto iii, 35 (Cary's translation).

I regret to have to add that in this "secret place"

* When the Germans bombarded Paris on Corpus Christi Day (the day on which we, at the Pope's request, spared Cologne) the Pope protested—to the Archbishop of Cologne! (See *Tekel*, by A. C. Champneys, p. 34.)

the poet also discovered one of His Holiness's predecessors confined! A man

> "Who to base fear
> Yielding, abjured his high estate."

Whatever Benedict XV and his advisers may have been thinking or doing behind their screen of silence and alleged neutrality, the hostility of the hierarchy and of the priesthood in general towards the Entente cannot be controverted. To what extent members of the Vatican, or the Curia, or their associates have been pulling the strings, we do not yet know; but that they have been so occupied is absolutely certain. Rome is confronted by the undoubted fact that wherever her religion, which is under the control of the Holy See, prevails, we found bitter and highly mischievous opposition to the Allied cause. Of Italy we have already spoken. In Spain two prelates spoke out manfully in support of the Entente, but the vast majority of clerics and clericals in the Peninsula formed the mainstay and backbone of the reactionary parties which afforded shelter to German submarines, permitted one of them to escape, and in other ways helped our enemies to the utmost of their power. The Spanish *Sol* recorded how certain Madrid priests, on the occasion of the Kaiser's birthday, substituted a prayer for the All-Highest in lieu of the customary one for King Alfonso. There is now a Hispano-Argentine movement directed against some nations of the Entente, England in particular, which is partly Socialist or Bolshevist, partly clerical—like the traitorous conspiracy which so nearly brought Italy to grief. The Spanish elements hostile to the Entente are, as we know, mainly reactionary and ecclesiastical; and the

huge financial interests of this country in Spanish-speaking lands are now being gravely endangered.

The action of the Irish Church during the war will be dealt with in a subsequent chapter, but a word must be said on Catholic hostility in Canada. French Canadians have two mother countries, but the bulk of them, nursing a questionable grievance, for long refused to fight for either. It was said that they would willingly have served, had it not been for the pressure of their Church; but the great body of ecclesiastics, "invincibly hostile and dangerously active," interposed their veto. The *curés* solidly obstructed recruiting in the country places, telling the people that the war was a judgment on France for her irreligion. Recruiting officers were driven out of the villages by the Catholic clergy, who told the people to let the English go to the Front. When they were killed, Frenchmen could take their jobs. The Clericals and Nationalists threatened revolt, opposed money grants for the war, vilified England and all her works, and hampered the patriotic efforts of Sir Robert Borden in every possible way. In Australia the ecclesiastics showed no less zeal on behalf of the Empire's enemies. The Archbishop of Melbourne, who held a commission in His Majesty's Forces as Chaplain-General, backed by the subordinate clergy, preached sedition so successfully that, mainly through their efforts, the vital Conscription Bill was defeated, Once more we have learned that a dogmatic Church, whose main preoccupation is with secular affairs, is a national nuisance and danger.

By August 1918 the fortune of war had veered to the side of the Entente, and the gravity of the position of the Teutonic Powers was apparent to all behind

the scenes. Early in the month a meeting of German generals and statesmen was held to determine what was to be done. On the 19th, 20th, and 21st of the month a lengthy communication, defending the Church's conduct, and obviously "inspired," appeared in the *Daily Telegraph*. The pro-Germanism of the Vatican and of Catholic opinion during the earlier stages of the war was frankly admitted—but "a new atmosphere" was said to be arising. Rome, in short, promised to be a good boy in future—but only on condition that England behaved nicely to the Vatican. In the event of our antagonizing Rome we were threatened with further mischief-making, to be followed, perhaps, by another war.

NOTE.—Since the above was written the Italian Commission of Inquiry into the Caporetto disaster has issued its Report. It contains some rather hazy, and highly inconclusive, observations on the effects of the Pope's Peace Note—and of certain remarks made by a Socialist Deputy—upon the soldiers' *moral* The findings of the Commission are too lengthy to quote in full, but the following is their substance. The phrases of the Pontiff (and of the Deputy) might, under the circumstances of the time, have a more or less extended influence in bringing about depression in the spirit of the troops, but it was considered that no weight can be given to the *phrases themselves* as real causes of the disaster. The phrases "might, all the same, taken in conjunction with other factors, and with the localities in which they were spread, weaken the spirit of resistance among a part of the troops."

These halting, and somewhat contradictory, findings appear to constitute an official expression of the Italian Government's benevolent intention towards the Holy See, and its desire to avoid making trouble: they in no way invalidate the conclusions arrived at in the preceding pages. Whether directly, or by wrongful interpretation of the Pope's words for propagandist purposes, by false impressions conveyed, by holding out illusory hopes of national benefits by making peace, or otherwise, the Note *was* used, and used most effectively, by the Vatican Party as a means of corrupting the soldiers and weakening the national resolution. Moreover, the clerical intrigue against the Allied cause was carried on in a variety of ways wholly unconnected with the Papal Note.

CHAPTER III

THE PAPACY AND NATIONALISM

"The Catholic Church is essentially a State within a State, with its frontiers, its policy, and its leaders entirely distinct from those of the nation" (W. E. H. Lecky).

THE sectarian spirit of Rome, with its inflexible principle of social and political severance, of detachment from patriotic life and aims, is ever a sucker on the spirit of nationality. The nation's aim is to unite, the Church's to separate; she is, and has always been, throughout the ages, the State's implacable foe. She regiments her partisans against their Governments, keeps men apart, and sows dissension. Her despotism over the human mind and will and spirit results in the withdrawal of large numbers of men and women from civic duties, weakens the patriotism of the laity, and tends to make of them inefficient citizens. She claims to be lord, not only of the spiritual, but also of the political conscience; her conception of nationality is that it is something akin to schism, a menace to her authority, and a danger to be combated by every means at her disposal.

The true spirit of nationalism seeks to make free, self-reliant men, citizens who are capable of carving out their own destinies and of moulding by their united exertions the destiny of the State. The ideal modern State watches over its growing progeny, strengthens the poor and weak in their unequal battle

with life, feeds and fortifies them with knowledge as a preparation for the struggles before them; arms them with liberty as a necessary weapon for social life and political power, and rejoices in seeing them grow as strong and vigorous as possible. But these methods do not suit the Roman ecclesiastical mother at all. Her pattern citizen is a very different class of human being. Her aim is to produce, not good and efficient men and women, but good Catholics; not free citizens of a great empire, but clerical assets for the aggrandizement of the Papacy. She sees, with a sure instinct, that growth of mind and character are deadly enemies of the machine-made absolutism she demands, and she puts a stopper upon them in the earliest stages of their development. A would-be dictator in matters temporal and spiritual, a religious imperialist waging war to the knife against knowledge and progress, with a civilization and a mentality out of joint with the times, she dreads, as something worse than the plague, a laity trained to think and act for itself. Opiates to dull the mind, authoritarian sedatives to paralyse the will, are her favourite prescriptions against incipient symptoms of intellectual or moral independence.

The Jesuit, as we all know, has been for many years the very soul of the Church, in the forefront of all her battles, the champion and the instrument of all her policies. It is no use for people to say, as is so often said, "Oh, it is only the Jesuits who cause the trouble." The Jesuits *are* the Church in her governing capacity: "We are all Jesuits now," as one bishop put it. The Order has always been the bitterest enemy of the nation; patriotism is most unpopular at the headquarters of the present Spaniardized Roman theocracy,

which does its utmost to discourage it. Love of country is regarded as a menace to the Church's supremacy: it is her business to disengage men from all mundane attachments, and win everything and all human beings for religion alone. "God wants all"; loyalty and civic duty should be placed at ecclesiastical disposal. Ecclesiastical authority, the *Catholic Encyclopædia* reminds us, is impelled at times to impose directions which call for the sacrifice of patriotic ideas or dreams; and so it has come about that in the late war the hostile authority of Rome lost to the Allies hundreds of thousands of good fighting men, brought disaster on their arms, and seriously weakened our Imperial constancy and will to victory.

The Society of Jesus is regarded by its members as quite the best Society in the world, the celestial favourite—it is the bodyguard of Our Lady, the Jesuits say, and she is alleged to call it "the Society of my Son" *—but, in spite of its select character, it recruits its ranks from all classes and all nations. The Jesuit is an out-and-out cosmopolite; there is a Black, as well as a Red, *Internationale*. Like the rabbit, he soon becomes indigenous in any clime, and his underground workings are no less persistent and destructive. Nearly every European country has had experience of them. The Order was mainly responsible for the terrible Thirty Years' War, the most ghastly conflict which the world had known until our day. The Germans had consequently ample knowledge of their powers for mischief, but they were nevertheless admitted into Prussia by the parsimonious Frederick

* *Autobiography and Life of George Tyrrell*, by M. D. Petre, ii, 284.

the Great, who welcomed them as cheap schoolmasters. Once, however, having secured a footing, they carried on a ceaseless warfare with clandestine weapons against the State which had given them shelter, until Bismarck could stand them no longer, and in 1872 the Falk Laws decreed their expulsion.

Forced to leave France for the second time in 1880, the members of the Society gradually returned and commenced their old game of undermining the State, inciting to religious and civil strife, and fanning the flames of political and sectarian hatred. The close of the century brought matters to a climax; the "clerical Tammany Ring," the caucuses of the religious associations meddling in politics and intriguing against the Republic, roused the people to fury. The unholy alliance between the Church and the militarist reactionaries smirched, through the terrible Dreyfus scandal, the fair fame of a proud nation; the safety of the Republic, the very foundations of the State, were adjudged to be gravely imperilled by the associations, and finally, in the opening years of the present century, the Government was once more driven to deal sternly with the religious Orders, who were made to quit the country. An eloquent Catholic apologist for the Pope, Father Brennan, complained the other day that France "from the days of Clovis has ever been the favoured child of the Church," but that unfortunately in latter years she had "proved anything but dutiful to her affectionate Mother." What really happened was that the affectionate mother made herself a perfectly unbearable member of the household; and the undutiful daughter, dissembling her love, did the only thing possible under the circumstances—turned the old

lady (or part of her) promptly, though perhaps with unnecessary roughness, out of the premises.

Precisely similar measures had to be taken against the Society in Spain, Portugal, Russia, Holland, and Switzerland. In this country, during the reign of Queen Elizabeth, they plotted unceasingly for our destruction. They were implicated in the Gunpowder Plot of 1605, for which their Superior, Henry Garnet, was condemned as a traitor. This failed to check their efforts to convert England, and they set to work with redoubled energy: "intrigue, money, women, everything was turned to account. To King Charles II they gave mistresses, and to his brother, confessors," says Michelet; and, as he points out, we have at least to thank the Jesuits for having, by their chicanery and duplicity, put Protestantism in England on a very sound foundation.

Such an extraordinary record of prolonged and ceaseless mischief-making, designed expressly to sap the authority of the State and to crush national aspirations, the world has never known. If a country, such as Ireland or Canada, suffers from a national sore, a deep-seated cause of division, the Church does her best to keep the sore open and prevent a settlement. The intriguing bishop, "le curé qui fait de la politique," who join hands with the enemies of their country and preach sedition; cardinals and other clerics who patronize defeatists; ecclesiastics and laymen of various grades who obstruct recruiting, threaten revolt, oppose money grants for the war, vilify England in the Press, and encourage resistance to measures regarded as necessary for victory—all these gentlemen have been, throughout the last five years, much more in evidence

than is either pleasant or permissible. Though the Church stands for authority, she is never averse to exploiting democracy in the interests of mediæval absolutism. She freely employs the rebel whenever religion requires his services—but sells him when he is no longer wanted. Poor Papineau, the Canadian revolutionary, found this out to his cost. The Quebec Church aided and encouraged his rebellion in 1837; but later on, as soon as the bishops found it to their advantage to betray him, they made a bargain with the British Government, and threw him over. The black robes gave the order, Papineau found himself deserted and fled to the United States, a sadder and a much wiser man on the subject of priestly unreliability.

In like fashion the rebel and the Socialist often find the priest a useful ally in their campaign against the State, as we have lately seen in Ireland, Canada, Australia, and Italy. In Ireland just now the rebel is in the saddle, and master of the situation: he rides in front, with the priest, like black care, seated behind. "The priest, as priest, sets the citizen to destroy his neighbour," says that brilliant Catholic writer, "Pat," in *The Sorrows of Ireland*; and the rebel is now freely employing the priest to aid him in overriding our laws and making British government a farce. The Church, Sinn Fein, and the Transport Union have together formed a Bolshevist organization for ruling the country. International Bolshevism has won over large numbers of Irish workmen; the Transport Union is organizing the movement, and the priests, with a view of maintaining their authority and that of the Church, are taking a hand in what is a very serious political

conspiracy under Bolshevist auspices, and aided by Bolshevist money.

The action of the Irish bishops in nullifying an Imperial statute, and vetoing British legislation, was a conspicuous instance of clerical undermining of State authority. Father Finlay, the eminent Dublin Jesuit and literary protagonist of the Clerical Party, says boldly that in some sense "we set our bishops above Parliament and the laws of Parliament." He tells us * that "the Church is infallible, not only in defining questions of faith and morals, but also in determining whether any given question is such"; every judicial tribunal, he declares, "must have the right to declare how far, to what matters, its authority extends." In other words, the Church has the right to dictate to the Government the matters in which she is to be paramount. In this case her supremacy was amply vindicated; her veto on the proposed legislation was entirely successful; the rusty tools were brought out, and proved highly effective. *Afflavit Ecclesia, et dissipati sunt*: Mother Church blew, and her enemies were scattered. A powerful Ministry was forced to bow the knee to a disloyal agitation, and abandoned, not perhaps without a certain relief, its military policy.

Similarly in its dealings with foreign Powers, the Church is apparently to have matters all her own way. No Concordat, said a well-known writer, can bind a Church for the simple reason that it is not a contract: no contract can possibly be made between a sovereign Power (the Church) and a temporal Power; and Pius IX honoured the book containing this view by a Brief of approbation. A Concordat, according to

* *Studies*, July 1918; see also letters in the *Irish Times*.

another highly authoritative writer, Father Liberatore, is not bilateral for the reasons given above, and a Pope can revoke it at any moment * : it is a mere scrap of paper, so to speak, in ecclesiastical eyes.

There is much talk just now about the necessity of excluding undesirable aliens from this country. The present writer does not see eye to eye with the extremists in this question, but it is just as well to remember that there are alien organizations as well as individuals, and that the Roman Church is essentially a foreign organization. The right of defending itself against open or covert enemies cannot be denied to any Government or people ; and if the Roman Church—whether through the Pope, the hierarchy, the priests, or the laymen—makes war against us, we may be forced, in face of continual acts of aggression, to reconsider our attitude towards the Papal organization as a whole.

Mr. Gladstone, in a sentence pregnant with meaning at the present time,† reminds us that "a religious society, which delivers volleys of spiritual censures in order to impede the performance of civil duties, does all the mischief that is in its power to do, and brings into question, in the face of the State, its title to civil protection." This is exactly what is now being done in Ireland ; and the day may come when this latter problem may have to be very seriously considered by sundry Governments of our Empire. We have every right to object to the use of theology as a weapon against the State in political or purely secular controversies ; to the Mass being "prostituted" (the phrase is not mine, but a Catholic bishop's) by making

* *The Jesuits*, by W. C. Cartwright, p. 212.
† *Vatican Decrees*, xlvii.

it a means of embarrassing a Government; to threats of hell-fire torments or the withdrawal of sacraments being hurled at persons who will not vote or act in other ways as Rome tells them. We protest against conscience being made a pretext for preaching sedition, lawlessness being justified under the name of religion; we deny that an episcopate or priesthood living under the protection of British law, while serving a foreign Church bristling with hostile sentiments towards us, have any right to bring into play the high authority with which their religion invests them, the vast ecclesiastical machinery of intimidation and cajolery which sacerdotalism has under its control, to the prejudice of our country and to the advantage of our enemies.

Catholics argue that these things are merely matters of local politics, and that it is unfair to blame religion. The *Tablet* of June 13, 1918, even went so far as to accuse me of dishonesty in not admitting that political discontents breed disaffection, whereas I occupied a whole page of the *National Review* in discussing this very question. Canon William Barry, D.D., reviewing this book in the *Catholic Times*, adopts the same line of argument. He mentions the language question in Canada and the Home Rule question in Ireland (just as I do here and elsewhere), and boldly declares that "Quebec and Ireland must be struck out of the indictment." I propose now to show that this is not so, and that what is called "religion" is a very potent source of mischief. To begin with the Irish priests and bishops, these ecclesiastics have not been acting merely in their secular capacity; they have been acting officially, and as a Church. They supported the anti-

Conscription movement as a matter of faith and morals, not as a mere political issue. They categorically declared that they decided the question, *not* as politicians, but as interpreters of ethics expressed in divine law. They used their theology—formulated in Rome—their vast spiritual powers derived from the Pope, and the whole machinery of a Church whose headquarters are in Italy, in order to thwart the Government. They ordered a public Mass of Intercession on April 21, 1918, and invoked the aid of the Holy Mother of God for their campaign. The priests threatened the people and the police with the worst spiritual penalties. The people were ordered to " approach the Sacraments and be ready to die in their resistance " to Conscription, and to kill policemen engaged in enforcing it. If the police did their duty in enforcing it they would be " committing a sin against the law of God," would be excommunicated, " die enemies of God," and " be damned in hell.' When Archbishop Walsh gave £105 to Sinn Fein it was not the gift of a mere private citizen ; it was the gift of a prince of the Church, and was freely advertised as such.

In Australia the Archbishop of Melbourne, fortified by his authority derived from the Papacy, uttered incitements to disloyalty in sermons from the pulpit : the attitude of the Canadian hierarchy towards politics is set out in a subsequent chapter. In England, as well as in Ireland, Papists feel themselves " morally bound " to invoke the aid of their co-religionists in the warfare against this country, and tell them that if they refuse to give it they will be disloyal to their religion. They appeal to Englishmen as good Catholics who are bound to the Irish by the ties of a common

Church and a common creed. The grievance against patriotic English Romanists is that they criticize the Holy See "and grumble against the Pope." "You are making friends with the worst enemies"—not of Ireland—but "of our holy faith; you are allying yourselves with demoniacs," says Father H. E. G. Rope in the *Catholic Times* of January 31. "You would well-nigh, if not absolutely, risk your salvation for the smiles of the Orange leaders. . . . Your Catholic Union is not Catholic, but Jingo." The appeal here, it will be noted, is almost entirely religious; politics is wholly subordinated to faith and morals.

In America the attitude of Romanists towards this country is perhaps even more serious. We are threatened, if we do not grant Ireland's demands, with a solid block of some twelve million Catholics united in a common religious bond of hatred towards England and waging war for the Faith against her. The Irish-American prelates are using their spiritual authority to rope into the campaign against England some millions of Italians, Poles, Slavs, Spaniards, and others who have no quarrel with us whatever. An able Catholic writer in the *Universe* of December 12, 1919, Mr. Shane Leslie, states that the communities in America most opposed to the Anglo-American entente "are, firstly, the Irish; and, secondly, the Catholics." If something is not done, says he, "matters will grow from worse to worse, and English Catholics will have the unhappiness of seeing their fellow-Catholics in America carrying out a successful and bitter warfare against their country, which generations will not alleviate."

And yet, in the face of these facts, Romanists reproach me when I charge—not specially the Pope or

the Vatican—but the Church as a whole, with promoting Anglophobia in all lands. To sum up, it is religion, with all the glamour and prestige attaching to it, that supplies these enemies of ours with the unifying force, and with much of the driving-power, which make them so formidable.

President Wilson, speaking on July 6, 1918, alluded to certain "Governments clothed with the strange trappings and the primitive authority of an age that is altogether alien and hostile to our own"; and he urged the destruction, or at least the reduction to virtual impotence, "of every arbitrary power anywhere that can separately, secretly, and of its single choice disturb the peace of the world." These wise words were aimed at the rulers of the Germanic Powers, but they are not without a certain application to a Church which claims and exercises arbitrary powers in secular affairs, and, "clothed with the strange trappings and primitive authority" of mediævalism, is for ever instilling the poison of sectarian hatred and political enmity.* Now anti-Semite, now anti-Protestant—always anti-social—her influence is continually directed to disturbing public and private peace. She must learn to get on with the States where she has voluntarily made her home, or else get out.

See Appendix I.

CHAPTER IV

"YOU MUST"

Perinde ac si cadaver, "Act exactly as though you were a corpse" (St. Ignatius Loyola).

CARDINAL BOURNE, preaching in Westminster Cathedral in 1915, and quoting from a previous sermon delivered from the same pulpit by Monsignor Croke Robinson, said very truly that "it is only the Catholic Church that dares to say to a man, 'You must.'" By a curious chance it happened that my wife and I were in the cathedral when the original sermon was delivered by the Monsignor. It made a deep impression upon us, as it did upon the rest of the congregation; and I shall never forget how, towards the close of an eloquent peroration, the preacher's fist shot forth, and a fanatic glow overspread his features, as he hissed out the words, "Y' must!" In this utterance we have the pith and marrow of Romanism: the fundamental principle of clericalism, which in these days is synonymous with Romanism, was never better or more concisely stated. "Authority fever" is a malady to which the Church has been continuously subject, and of late years the patient's temperature has been rising dangerously high. "There is no boundary," said Pius X, "fixed to the domain in which the Church's Head can, and ought to, exercise his will": and the same pontiff, a really gentle and good-natured man,

on another occasion told his assembled bishops that they were under the very serious obligation of aiding the Pope in the government of the Church by suppressing Modernism, and of striving "to combat error and defend the truth, even to the shedding of blood."

Anthropologists tell us that fear is the basis of most savage or primitive religions; ignorant and superstitious men shudder in the presence of the mysterious or the unknown, and their dread of occult evil induces them to engage medicine-men or clerical wizards to propitiate the supernatural powers, and so avert calamities which the ill-will of malignant deities may be preparing for them. Romanism is no less essentially a religion of terror. Newman tells us that he was always "shuddering" from the age of sixteen upwards, and it was the spirit of abject dread which drove him, thirty years later, to those courts of Rome where shuddering people find a congenial resting-place. Christ, we are reminded—though the text on which the statement rests is of very doubtful authenticity—imposed the Kingdom of Heaven under pain of eternal damnation; man's natural tendencies towards intolerance and persecution have thus received divine sanction, and God's Vicar on earth must no less assert his authority with all the weapons at his disposal. The right to employ force has, of course, always been claimed as a necessary means of imposing the Curia's arbitrary will on a reluctant population; and when so amiable a pontiff as the late Pius X talks, like some Vatican All-Highest, of shedding blood in so light-hearted a fashion, we know that the old sanguinary views are still maintained in their pristine vigour.

Nor must it be forgotten that the Church claims absolute obedience, in all sorts of matters only remotely connected with faith or morals, by virtue of the Vatican Decrees promulgated in 1870. These decrees, being pronouncements of an Ecumenical Council and affirmed by the Pope, are almost certainly infallible; they are unquestionably binding on the faithful. A Catholic, therefore, cannot say as to this—as they are so fond of saying when tackled on some awkward point—"Oh, we are not bound to believe all that!" What individual Catholics believe, or do not believe, is always a mystery; probably many of them are not very clear about it themselves. Some believe what they wish to believe, most of them simply what they are told to believe. A Catholic first makes up his mind as to what he is going to believe, and then sets to work, like Newman, to find reasons for his belief. He is—again like Newman—a man with a desire to be governed, a natural bent towards authority at all costs; and the Jesuit Order amply supplies him with the authority for which he craves. The rule of the Jesuits, who are now undisputed masters of the Church, has always been obedience, in matters of faith or relating to faith, of the corpse or walking-stick order —as enjoined by their illustrious founder, St. Ignatius Loyola: their pattern Church is a collection of individual nonentities bereft of individual volition and thought under the unchallenged supremacy of the Pope. Cardinal Mercier, whose name will long be held in honour for his courageous conduct during the war, prescribes the following medicine for sick souls: if your mind is troubled with doubts, he says, "consult a treatise on apologetic; or, better still, seek an

enlightened guide " *—a guide, that is, whose enlightenment is of the quality provided by a seminary education. The last thing you should do, in his opinion, is to sit down and think the matter out for yourself. Rome does not ask you for genuine belief; she asks you to do as you are told. The vital thing about a Roman doctrine is, not that it is true,† but that the Church says it has got to be accepted as true.

So it comes about that we now see the Church fighting political rivals with religious weapons, and using theology as an instrument against the State or the individual in all sorts of purely secular disputes. The appetite for tyrannizing over men's minds and bodies grows with what it feeds on. The dominion of the Church must be extended and consolidated at all hazards. The slightest sign of weakness or doubt or hesitation must be avoided; compromise would be absolutely fatal. It is neck or nothing with Romanism; the system must be taken as it stands, or not at all; denial of one article of faith would sap the foundations of the Papacy; take one brick out, and the whole crazy edifice falls to the ground. The consequence is that the Church is compelled to be for ever finding new forms of " protective " belief, in order to strengthen her position, new shackles for souls whose chains are already sufficiently burdensome; and the " deposit of faith " receives an apparently unending series of new accretions. The Church to-day, as Tyrrell points out, insists on men believing under penalty of eternal torment various doctrines (the Immaculate Conception,

* See Tyrrell's *Medievalism*, p 18.

† Mr. Fawkes, in his admirable book, *Studies in Modernism*, quotes a Roman prelate as saying, " You English make too much of truth."

and so forth) which St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Bernard, St. Augustine, and other holy men rejected. "Why should men of to-day be forced to believe under pain of eternal damnation what St. Thomas and St. Bernard denied with impunity?"

Tyrrell's pertinent question admits of an easy answer. These new doctrines are *necessary* accretions; they serve to buttress the Church's authority and to safeguard her faith. Such is the ecclesiastical argument; but that faith would seem to be a rather shaky thing which requires to be continually fortified afresh with new fictions and new marvels, a sort of Hindenburg line of defensive and renovated theology, barbed-wire entanglements of abstruse dogma, as a protection against infidel assaults. The defences, like those of the Germans, are not impregnable; but orders come from clerical headquarters that the position must be held to the last, and at all costs. The Protestant Broad Churchman, when his dogmatic outer lines are forced, at once accepts the situation in a cheerful spirit, and, fighting mild rearguard actions on the way, retires smilingly "according to plan" to previously prepared positions. Not so the Roman Catholic. He stands his ground, brings up his heavy artillery, discharges volleys of ecclesiastical censures, fulminatory encyclicals, excommunications and suspensions, and lets loose fire-breathing Bulls—yet somehow nobody seems, as a rule, one penny the worse. Rome forgets that tyranny, with its resultant inertia and incompetence, is now the worst weapon a Church can use; and that it makes in these days more effective enemies than it can ever make submissive slaves. A Church's proper weapon of inducement is, not coercive action, but

moral suasion; she should say "You ought," not "You must!" She should act as minister to mankind, not as irresponsible dictator. A Church was made to serve and benefit mankind, not to compel men with whips and scorpions to serve her at the cost of their own degradation. Let Rome doff that robe of assumed humility which it wears with so ill a grace, and with a view of concealing the arrogance of its pretensions; let it learn to be humble in a genuine way, and so make itself more worthy of our respect. As Tyrrell shrewdly observes, "I trust I am not humble, from what I know of humble men."

It remains to consider briefly the character of the men who under a humble exterior make the most extraordinary claims to absolute power and celestial enlightenment.* People who say, "You must," and set themselves up as infallible arbiters upon moral questions, cannot complain if we want to know something of the way in which they order their own lives. It would be a good thing if the general public in Europe and America could obtain a truer appreciation of the men who rule the Vatican, and the result of whose deliberations are on certain occasions sent forth to the world as the utterances of the Holy Spirit. They are probably not so bad as they are sometimes painted; they are certainly not nearly so good as they pretend to be. I am not an adept in the art of picturesque invective, so I will confine myself for the present to the judgments passed upon them by good and very able men, mostly Catholics amply qualified to form an

* The *Month*, June 1919, quotes with approval Manning's characteristic utterance: "The collective intelligence, culture, experience, instincts, and discernment, natural and supernatural, of the episcopate is the highest light of council upon earth."

opinion, who have had frequent dealings with the Curia, and, in some cases, have suffered at its hands. Newman's strictures on the "insolent and aggressive faction" are well known. Nor does so great a religious force as Father Tyrrell spare his condemnation. Tyrrell is, I think, unquestionably the most outstanding figure in the ecclesiastical world since the death of Newman; and he is as much the superior of Newman in judgment and understanding as he is in candour, so his testimony cannot lightly be dismissed. He felt the moral badness of the Roman Curia so deeply and acutely in his later years that he refused to "take active service as a priest, under such a *canaille*." The moral and religious rottenness of the clerical world is, he said, simply endless and unfathomable.* He describes the Vatican officials more than once as a soulless bureaucracy composed of selfish, godless, worldly, and often loose-living men. That the ecclesiastics who had the ear of Pius X were "most frequently slaves of incontinence, of insincerity, of sloth, of ignorance," is the verdict passed by that enlightened band of Modernist priests who wrote *What we Want*, a powerful Italian protest against clerical persecution of liberal opinions. The favourite recreations (as *Who's Who* would say) of these pillars of the Vatican appear to have been "censure, espionage, calumny, low and vulgar slander," and informing against their fellow clerics. I regret also to find other authoritative writers, including such names as those of Lamennais and the witty and accomplished Abbé Houtin, endorsing this estimate of the Curia. "Ce sont des lamentables"· "they have disfigured the gospel of peace,

* *Autobiography*, ii, 293, 386.

and made of the world a eunuch without brains or heart." They are avaricious, blind, jealous, spiteful, mendacious, bigoted, and intolerant sycophants, "by turns truculent and intriguing, offensive and obsequious, a mixture of Torquemada and Tartuffe." There are clerics, says Mr. Fawkes in his *Studies in Modernism*, who will commit almost any crimes; "it would be difficult to find an act of cruelty, of duplicity, or of meanness at which they hesitate," and yet they may possibly be men of conspicuous piety in their interior life, who think they are doing God service by their evil actions.

I would not be taken as endorsing all this strong language, even though it proceeds from men of the highest character and attainments, men, too, who have had the fullest means of accurate observation; but we may safely say that the Vatican often contains within its walls a collection of thoroughly unscrupulous, though possibly pious, people such as could not be matched elsewhere in Europe. That Benedict XV should have had as his intimate friend and confidant a disreputable adventurer like Monsignor Gerlach, is highly significant, and quite characteristic of the Roman system. There are always plenty of Gerlachs to be found in the purlieus of the Papacy.

This combination of piety with unscrupulosity has always been a common feature of Romanist psychology. The simple-minded worshipper who sees the imposing figure of the priestly or episcopal ministrant standing, like some human archangel, resplendent in the purple or scarlet of the Papacy:

> his back
> Brave with the needlework of Noodledom,

as Browning's Bishop Blougram has it—amid the cunningly mingled glooms and lights through which the tall windows, with their stained glass and exquisite traceries, may be seen rising above the chapels and sanctuaries up to the darkness and the mystery of the vaulted roof—many such a worshipper has yet to learn that this gorgeous being is, after all, only a very ordinary mortal possessing like passions with himself.

Benedict XV is now the one and only despot remaining in the western world—with the solitary, and temporary, exception perhaps of President Wilson. Does the Pope really think, do the cold-brained politicians who surround him think, that he can retain his despotism in its present mediæval form, and in the face of a world seething with revolutionary instincts? His priests and bishops in Ireland are busy, no doubt, posing as revolutionaries. Are they sincere, or are they merely acting the part which they think will best serve the Church's interests and their own? In any case, the game they are playing is a rather curious one; the ecclesiastical tight-rope dance between morals and politics is the reverse of edifying—but the consideration of this subject must be deferred to a later chapter.

The Papacy says that it is standing for authority; it claims to act as a breakwater against the flowing tide of anarchism, and I agree that the weakening of the bonds of authority is not the least among the many evils from which the world is suffering to-day. But for authority to be valid in these times it must be properly constituted on a reasonable basis: it must be of a quality that commands men's reverence, and be exercised by people who deserve their respect, or it

cannot last. The modern Papacy does not command men's respect: the *sentina clericorum*, the shady crew that surrounded Pius X, and certain other Popes, deserved, and earned, the world's derision. The Roman system is authoritarianism run mad. Reverence to whom reverence is due, but " authority " such as Rome's only serves to bring the principle of authority into general contempt. Some Italian Liberals of the seventies regretted the disappearance of the Papal States, with their crime, filth, and general disorganization, because it deprived the world of a terrible object-lesson in the evils of the Papacy; and to-day the Bolshevist similarly uses the Roman system as a lever for uprooting our social organization. He points the finger of scorn at Catholic ecclesiasticism and says, " See what your authority leads to! Let us try anarchy." Reason, as I think Renan said, is only fatal to false gods, and nothing but good can come from exposing them. Put up a false god, and induce people to worship it, and you only injure religion and all that religion stands for.

CHAPTER V

ROMANISM AND MILITARISM

" He that only rules by terror
Doeth grievous wrong.
Deep as Hell I count his error.
Let him hear my song."
(Tennyson's *The Captain.*)

IN the *National Review*, for June 1918, the writer remarked that Romanism and militarism were twin plagues of the modern world; and this chapter is designed to show why, and in what way, they are twins. In drawing a parallel between the militarist systems of Rome and Potsdam I have no wish to make any unfair use of the prejudice which the war has naturally raised against everything German, a prejudice which is being freely exploited by Catholics in order to injure in popular estimation German scholarship, theology, and Biblical exegesis, a German-made Reformation, and a Royal Family with German blood in their veins. If we condemn German actions and qualities we should condemn them, not because they are German, but because they are bad, and this principle also holds good when we are dealing with the Roman Church. Of the two plagues priestcraft, in my opinion, is the more serious; it is deeper, more fundamental and far-reaching, more illusive, subtle, and penetrating. Militarism is, or was until quite lately, a more pressing danger threatening our material interests, our lives, our liberties, our property, and our peace:

Jesuitism, once more triumphant in the Papal organization, is a disease of the soul, poisoning life at its source, and doing, as Carlyle says, "deadly execution on the general soul of man."

The spirit of the Papacy is the spirit of Junkerism, and the analogy between the workings of the two systems is extraordinarily complete. Both have the same political philosophy of absolutist mediævalism, are embodiments of the autocratic idea—the idea, that is to say, of the dictator and tyrant. In either case we are left with the impression of remorseless power, exercised without mercy or scruple, and moulding the individual will with a view to its subjection, and that of the *orbis terrarum*. Militarism frankly enthrones authority in the region of material things; Rome, while pretending that its kingdom is of God, covets no less than Junkerism a purely secular and intellectual domination. It was Germany's idea that it was her right—nay, her duty—to impose her culture on the world by force of arms, for its good as well as hers. She claims to have so absorbed the quintessence of all that was best in the cultures of Greece, Rome, France, Italy, and England, that these cultures are now superfluous. The Latin Church claims, in precisely similar fashion, that supernatural enlightenment was vouchsafed to her hundreds of years ago, and that subsequent knowledge is wholly subordinate to that all-sufficing inspiration. "We Kings of Prussia sacrifice to the State, not only our life, but also our honour," said Frederick II; and the Roman zealot is equally ready, not only to sacrifice his life, but to cast truth and honour to the winds, for the sake of the organization he serves.

The Junker's notion that nations exist for the benefit of divinely ordained rulers is precisely that of the Church. The Kaiser and his supporters are political Ultramontanes: the Pope is a spiritual (and would-be temporal) Kaiser. William II's insensibility to modern ideas was often a grief to enlightened and progressive Germans. "A united empire obedient to one will" was his aspiration: "There is only one master in the empire," he said, "and I am that one—I tolerate no other." "La tradizione son io" (*I* am tradition), said Pius IX; and the Vatican Council freely accorded him the boon of autocracy he craved. The ecclesiastic thinks himself entitled to interfere and dictate in all sorts of matters outside his own sphere; the German dictators, their chief in particular, had similar ideas. Both make absurd claims to universal knowledge; each thinks he is the chosen instrument of the Lord, responsible to the Creator alone, and justified in using any means for the attainment of his ends. The Kaiser told his soldiers that if he ordered them to shoot down their relatives, brothers, or even parents, they must obey his commands without murmuring. Rome, through the mouth of her chosen prophet in the moral sphere, St. Alphonsus Liguori,* says that a son must denounce his father, a father his son, a wife her husband, to the Inquisition—to be, perhaps, tortured or burned. An oath made not to do these things is not to be observed. The Kaiser made the school, the university, and the theatre "the instrument of the monarch," just as the French-Canadian bishops now make them the instrument of the Church's aggrandizement. The Pope and Kaiser alike demand, and receive,

* *Theologia Moralis*, iv, 250.

the adoration of their faithful subjects. An American orator recently likened the Hohenzollerns to those sacred apes in India, who had been worshipped so long that they had come to believe in their own divinity; the occupants of the Holy See are in the like sad case. Prince Henry of Prussia told his august and Imperial brother that he was going abroad, "not for fame or laurels, but to preach the gospel of your Majesty's sacred person" *; and the sycophants of the Vatican surround the Pope with the same fearful atmosphere of adulation, and betray a similarly distressing lack of humour; they told Pius IX that he was "the living Christ," the "Lamb of the Vatican," "God that condemns"; and I believe that His Holiness enjoyed the flattery. Other pontiffs have been garlanded with similar flowers of eulogy. The German royal family, and not a few German commoners, have always displayed a species of proprietary interest in the tribal Jehovah whom they worship, and whom they familiarly designate "our old God." He dwells, as they tell us, "high above Cherubim and Seraphim and Zeppelins," and sometimes he came down to help his "ally," the Kaiser, and the Crown Prince, to break the Franco-British lines. To quote from Mr. Barry Pain's fine verses in the *Times* of August 28, 1914:

"Led by Wilhelm, as you tell,
God has done extremely well;
You with patronizing nod
Show that you approve of God.
"Kaiser, face a question new—
This—does God approve of you?
. . . . . .
Impious braggart, you forget;
God is not your conscript yet."

* *What is Wrong with Germany?* by W. H. Dawson, p. 101.

But God, apparently, *is* the Pope's conscript, and also the conscript of the priest. God is regarded by the Church as the Pope's Vicar in Heaven, the passively obedient executor of the Papal will; the episcopal servant of God, in some Catholic theory, is made judge of the world, and "his Master in heaven ratifies the sentence which the servant pronounces on earth." Thus God Himself, as Tyrrell says, is brought down to the level of a bishop, and takes His orders from Rome. An archbishop addressed Pius X in the following words: "O inconceivably exalted power! Heaven suffers earth to prescribe the kind and measure of its decisions." Pope Urban II said that "the hands of the priest are raised to an eminence granted to none of the angels, of creating God, the Creator of all things." Others speak of the priest as being "equal in grandeur to God Himself," as the "creator of the Creator," and exalted "above all that is called God, or that is worshipped." The eminent Jesuit, Bourdaloue, declares that Christ submits Himself to the priest in the Sacrament, becomes his subject, and renders him the most prompt and exact obedience. The priest's character enables him to "command his Sovereign Lord, and make Him descend from heaven." *

"Veneration for the Hohenzollern dynasty," said a Radical leader in Germany, "has been erected into an ecstatic and mystic religion." "Narrow-mindedness in political, religious, and social matters has traditionally driven from Germany the best elements of the nation," says Mr. Dawson: Döllinger, Tyrrell, Mivart, Loisy,

* For further details on this rather repulsive subject see *Mediævalism*, p. 71; Michelet's *Le Prêtre, la Femme, et la Famille*; Gladstone's *Vaticanism*; Robertson's *The Papal Conquest*; and other works.

and many other brilliant Catholics, were they now alive, might say exactly the same of Rome. A general level of mediocrity—I think myself that the intellectual level in Germany is often placed lower than it ought to be—is thus established in both systems. Germany has been described, rather unfairly, I think, as a community of second-rate brains : the brain of the average Jesuit is far from being even second-rate—the levelling influences of the militarist organization in either case will hardly be questioned. In the making of both systems we seem to detect the slow grinding of a big and complicated machine, and the operatives of the Jesuit political mechanism were seldom men of high quality. Head and heart alike were lacking. Loyola and a few other early Generals of the Society were exceptionally able men, but the intense mediocrity, the absence of any outstanding merit, in the later leaders have not been the least of the causes which have contributed to the Order's undoubted failure. Under Teutonic militarism and Romanism alike we find a people remarkably unanimous in their ideas and discipline, akin in their ignorance concerning the thoughts and prepossessions of other nations, submissive to a fault to their own rulers, but equally determined to ram their notions of what is right down the throats of other people. Both have been saturated from their earliest infancy with certain doctrines which it is considered unpatriotic by the one, and impious by the other, to oppose or even question. The four great educational weapons—the school, the university, the theatre, and the newspaper—are in both systems under the control of the central power, which takes care that they all shall teach the same lesson. History is

adulterated in Germany for the benefit of the ruling caste, though the adulteration is less outrageous than the absurd travesties of historical facts served up to the pupils in Catholic schools. The children hearing the same things from their nursery days until the time comes when they emerge into the outer world—things which are seldom so much as questioned in what is considered reputable society—become permeated with notions which it is blasphemy to contradict; and people brought up in a system based upon the negation of free will and independent judgment are easily welded together for the purpose of common action. "Prussia," said a writer in the *Nineteenth Century* for May 1918, "has proved the power of authority to shape the mind of a people. It is a frightful discovery, pregnant with horror." True enough: but it was Rome, not Prussia, that invented the process and was the first to prove its horror.

It is arguable, no doubt, that the autocratic system which has had such disastrous results was the system best suited to the psychology of the individual German, and it is no less possible that a similar system may fit in with that undeveloped mentality which is a characteristic of the vast majority of the Church's followers. In either case we observe a curious mixture of cleverness and fatuity. A certain inhumanity, a lack of sympathy which hindered their agents and rulers from correctly gauging the quality of the peoples with whom they had to deal, has been the curse of both systems. Both were cunning and worldly-wise, but both overshot the mark with their somewhat limited cleverness. In the deeper psychology both have proved melancholy failures. The Germans failed owing to their inability

to estimate the motives which prompted their enemies' action. They appear to have a correct appreciation of the Russian psychology, but they do not possess, they never did possess, any real knowledge of the true Britain, the true France, or the true America. Sympathy is a necessary qualification for the understanding of human nature; and they blundered hopelessly as to the character, the political conditions, and the resources of the Allies, and the ignorance born of their insolence and contempt led them to their ruin. In like manner the protagonists of the Papacy showed themselves to be very clever in certain directions, but the terrible narrowness of Romanism cramps their vision and confounds their best-laid schemes. They fail to appreciate correctly the significance of events or the springs of action in minds different from their own. Their ignorance in this respect, and the frequent misconceptions which arise from it, lead them sadly astray; a Pope, misled by the reports of his agents, is apt to find himself landed in impossible positions from which he cannot withdraw without serious loss of prestige. The strait-waistcoats he would impose on mankind are indignantly rejected: his decrees, void of solid backing, pass unheeded; his encyclicals are mere *brutum fulmen* to a world that has other things to think of than mediæval speculations. A considerable talent for practical affairs, though limited in scope owing to a narrow experience of human nature and a necessarily cramped outlook on life, is marred by an "incredible intellectual childishness." "Astute as the high officials of the Curia are on their own ground, remove them from it by a hairbreadth and their wisdom is folly: they live in a world of abstractions; contact with the actual is

to them what the first pale light of dawn is to ghosts —it falls upon them and they disappear. They are ignorant of our language, our institutions, our character; they do not see that the episodes on which they rely are episodes only—backwaters lying out of the stream of our national life." *

Both organizations have the same objects and the same methods, coercion and repression, but each combines policy with its dictation. The Vatican formula is more consistently affirmative than the German: it says "You must," while the Junker rather favours "*Verboten*" ("You mustn't"). "Military witless obedience" is the rule of conduct enforced by the Jesuit Order, as described by those who have escaped from the tentacles of that ecclesiastical octopus. The Jesuit militia is drilled into a sort of Prussian Guard of clerical regulars, a body whose members are enjoined to persuade themselves that all demands are just.† The soldier outside his barracks is temporarily a free man; but the Jesuit never escapes the barrack atmosphere; he is always an ecclesiastical slave, because, where blind, unthinking passivity is imposed by religious autocrats, a man's mind and will and judgment are never his own. The pressgang system of artificially forced vocations, employed to fill the Order's exhausted ranks by means of novices of tender years, is as cruel as it is pernicious: conscription is far more merciful. Dissensions exist, and murmurings are heard, in the ranks of both armies. Those of the German army have recently erupted into flame, and an upheaval of a similar, though probably less san-

* *Studies in Modernism*, by the Rev. Alfred Fawkes, p. 100.
† *Autobiography and Life of G. Tyrrell*, ii, 447.

guinary, nature will probably occur some day amongst the Romanist rank and file when they get more education.

The German is great on " massed psychology," and Tyrrell tells us how the Jesuit rulers seek to discourage private friendships and mutual confidence among their subjects and to attach them to the central authority, not as an adhesive mass, but as separate units, and so to exalt official at the expense of personal qualifications. Both serve a divinity of their own making. The German idolizes a *Deutschland über Alles*, and the Jesuit is taught that every member of his exalted Order who dies in it is predestined to eternal salvation. Militarism is no more unscrupulous than sacerdotalism in the methods employed to secure its absolutist ends : the German contempt for ethical sanctions, which has so disgusted the world of late years, is largely shared by a religion whose moral theologians tell us that we need not resist temptation when it becomes a bore (see chap. xiv, chap. ii), and that sin is a ladder whereby we may mount more easily to heaven. Sometimes, as in France before the Dreyfus affair, the pair joined forces and worked together in the cause of reaction, as in all probability the Vatican and the Central Powers were working together in the early days of the war. The clerical Press at the time of the Dreyfus case extolled the methods of Attila as a means of spreading the faith, thus slightly anticipating the Kaiser's celebrated advice to his soldiers in China. Both Rome and Potsdam are brutal, for autocracy results almost inevitably in the degradation of character ; and neither appreciates the effect which their brutality has on the conscience of the world. The stupid savagery which

sent poor, old, innocent Jean Calas to be broken on the wheel (see chap. ix) is matched by the criminal folly of the men who butchered Nurse Cavell and Captain Fryatt. The wicked, senseless deeds reacted in either case injuriously on the perpetrators.* But the Church aggravates the offence of her brutality by pretending that she is brutal to please God. They are both alike in professing a firm belief in the efficacy of frightfulness; but the Hun is frank about being frightful for patriotism and *Weltmacht*: he at least makes no false pretences as to his motives in terrorizing. Rome, on the other hand, affects to burn and torture so-called heretics for their own good. Cruelty is always hateful; cruelty in the name of Christ is not only hateful, but irrational. We rave rightly against the calculating brutality of the Hun, but that is no reason why we should forget the much greater brutalities of the still existent Inquisition—that "glory of Spain," over whose "flaming pyres" and "benevolent vigilance" good Catholics may still be heard rhapsodizing. The German war-lord burning and slaying in the name of a tribal deity, and with the philanthropic motive of shortening the war, is a more congruous figure than the ecclesiastic who slays and racks in the name of the gentle Jesus, and out of compassion for the victim's soul. Prussia, with all the vile things standing to her account, would hardly do so vile a thing as that.

Germans and Jesuits share in a self-complacent conviction that their system is the finest in the world,

* Compare the brutish folly which inspired the edicts of Rome against the Netherlands in the sixteenth century. On February 16, 1568, *all the inhabitants* were condemned to death by the Holy Office as heretics—"probably the most concise death-warrants ever framed" (Motley's *Rise of the Dutch Republic*, Part III, chap. ii).

and that nothing else can touch it; but the Jesuit has the better claim to originality. He was first in the field, and his powers of adaptation, his ingenious devices for crushing out any germ of independent impulse, the skill he showed in earlier days in framing disciplinary ordinances and privileges, have never been surpassed. Loyola had more faculties lodged with him as supreme authority than ever Ludendorff had. He devised an elaborate mechanism, with a complicated system of checks and counter-checks which worked with remarkable smoothness, for the attainment of the Society's multifarious ends; and the Popes of to-day are reaping the fruits of his assiduous labours. There were many grades in his Order, and advancement depended on the absolute discretion of the superiors. Moral worth or, as he called it, "purely natural goodness," was no more a title to promotion in his eyes than it was in the Kaiser's: without absolute obedience there could be no holiness. He had a no less efficient secret service than the Germans. There was a continuous flow of correspondence and communication from every organ of the Society *; reports in writing were sent in every week to the Provincial, who in his turn reported to the General, and, to ensure the reports being confidential, an efficient system of code-words and ciphers was invented. The same splendid secret-service system, espionage, eavesdropping, informing, and denouncing; the same trickiness, subterranean working, and intrigue—a spy in every corner, an ear to every keyhole—existed as in the German system to-day. The Germans, as we know, have their secret information-bureaux telling who are friends,

* See *The Jesuits*, by W. C. Cartwright.

who enemies, who is to be trusted, and who is not, and the extent of their resources; their large banks and traders in foreign countries kept elaborate *dossiers* for the use of the Home Government and for the ruin of rival firms. Elaborate organizations and schemes, careful co-ordination, resourcefulness in small matters, patient application to detail, trade, finance, industry, and other methods used by the Jesuits, were the levers employed by the Germans in their peaceful penetration of rival States. The peaceful (and highly commercial) penetration of China in 1581 by the Society of Jesus lasted over a century, and was extremely profitable to certain Fathers, but the usual scandals occurred, and Pope Clement XI in 1715 at last brought his mutinous crew to heel by a strongly worded Bull. The Jesuits are helped in their machinations by the very potent instrument of religion, which is lacking to the German. In social matters, too, the Germans are at a disadvantage with the men who have, and always have had, a number of influential women at their beck and call, and are thus able to dominate a considerable section of what is called "Society."

The famous French General Mangin told us not long ago that collectively there are no people more untruthful than the Germans, or more facile in changing their tone according to circumstances. Of the Church's talents in this direction I shall have frequent occasion to speak hereafter. In aggressive ambition, the abuse of hospitality, in treachery and intrigue against the States that give their members shelter and a home, there is not much to choose between the two systems, and their methods are almost identical. Other nations are groping their way painfully and imperfectly towards

a brotherhood of peoples; Rome and Potsdam have done their utmost to prevent union or assimilation. There are no such patriots, in a sense, as the Junker and the Jesuit, but their patriotism is of that sour, rancid order which always ends by troubling the world. Both Jesuit and German are undesirable aliens, but the Jesuit is much the more undesirable of the two. Both are working, not for the country they are making their temporary home, but for the great organizations they respectively serve; and, while the German is an efficient and useful worker, the Jesuit, as a rule, remains nothing but a parasite on the community to which he attaches himself. The domination of Rome, if such an event were nowadays thinkable, would be, in the long run, a far greater evil for the world than the triumph of Teutonism. It would not be pleasant to be under the Prussian jack-boot, but men could still at least call their minds and souls their own. The pursuit of knowledge would go on unchecked, for, as I have said, I think the cramping influence of Junkerism upon the intellect is sometimes exaggerated: I do not believe that even the German rulers were really obscurantist. *Verboten* in small things is annoying, but *Verboten* in the larger empire of the spirit means self-mutilation. It is irksome to be forced to walk on one side of the street when you want to walk on the other; not to be able to think as you like on vital matters is destructive of character and intellect. The soldier in militarist countries is generally a good servant, but nearly always a bad master, and the same may be said everywhere of the ecclesiastic. Personally, if I must have my life ordered by a drill-sergeant, I would rather he were a soldier than a cleric.

Weltmacht oder Niedergang (world-dominion or downfall) was the war-cry of the Prussians, and downfall has been their portion. Arrogance and insolence, meddling and mischief-making, have proved the ruin of the great German Empire. The same things, added to a narrow intolerance and obscurantism, will some day be the ruin of the kindred autocracy, Roman ecclesiasticism. We have rid ourselves—for ever, let us hope—of the first great world-nuisance: let us now get to work on the second. The war against the deadliest and most debasing of all tyrannies, the tyranny over the human mind and spirit, must go on. Popes who seek to spread Catholic truth and serve God by "the shedding of blood" must be taught sounder doctrine. There need be no bloodshed: our armies will not, like the armies of the Hun, leave a red trail of carnage and ruin in their track. Our most lethal weapons will be quill pens and typewriters; for ammunition we shall have science, history, criticism, Biblical exegesis, comparative mythology—and common sense. In the admirable words of Lord Morley, we must say to the priests, "You have so debilitated the minds of men and women by your promises and your dreams, that many a generation must come and go before Europe can throw off the yoke of your superstition. But we promise you that they shall be generations of strenuous battle. . . . You may do your worst, and still humanity will escape you; still the conscience of the race will rise away from you. . . . We shall pass you by on your flank; we will not exterminate you; we shall explain you." *

* *Critical Miscellanies*, i, 80.

CHAPTER VI

THE TRAGI-COMEDY OF IRELAND

"It is the tragedy of the decline and fall of the human will in the people we are witnessing" (*Co-operation and Nationality*, by Æ).

If a people's religion can be measured by the number of clerics and clericals it possesses, Ireland must surely be the most religious country in the world. It is stated that she has, in proportion to population, eleven times as many priests, eleven times as many times archbishops and bishops, as Belgium; seven times as many bishops, ten times as many priests and nuns, as Austria; seven times as many prelates as Germany.* Five-sixths of these reverend gentlemen, we are also assured, contribute neither to the spiritual nor the temporal felicity of the island; yet our British Government, ignominiously shirking its responsibilities, has tried to purchase peace and save itself trouble by entrusting to their hands the entire control of the people's education. All the budding intelligence of the country is under clerical direction, and a host of independent witnesses belonging to various creeds and political parties testify as to the disastrous results. In his years of maturity the Protestant becomes a free man, but the fetters are never taken off the Catholic until his body is laid in the grave.

* See *The Case Against Home Rule*, p. 216, quoting Mr. F. H. O'Donnell, M.P., a staunch Catholic Home Ruler.

About £1,750,000 a year is spent on Irish education, and the expense is defrayed almost entirely by the Imperial Exchequer; the contributions from the local rates are very trifling. The grant-in-aid is one guinea per pupil more than in England or Scotland, so that, taking it as a whole, there is no niggardliness on the part of the spending authorities. The clerics, as I have said, have unlimited control over the whole primary system, plenty of money to work with, and unlimited opportunities all round. How have they used these opportunities? Let the facts answer. With about the same population as Scotland, Ireland has twice as many schools, 3500 more head teachers, and twice as many illiterates.* The late Catholic Bishop of Limerick, Dr. O'Dwyer, an exceptionally able prelate, told us that "the clergy that teach have never received a true education"; and their pupils go "to swell the ranks of the *déclassés*, without an education that is worth a button to them for any useful purpose." The lay teachers are appointed by the clergy, whose submissive tools they become, and many of them are hopelessly unqualified. In some cases the teachers, who have failed at the Commissioners' qualifying examination, join a religious Order and so become *ipso facto* qualified, and are made teachers! Sometimes the post is put up to auction by the priest,† and knocked down to the highest bidder; and the reverend manager then proceeds to levy a tax on the slender income of the wretched

* *Aspects of the Irish Question*, p. 68, by Sydney Brooks, an ardent Home Ruler; see also an informing article in the *Statist*, March 23, 1918, which says that "the system results in the turning out of mere illiterates."

† *The Sorrows of Ireland*, by "Pat," p. 32; and *Aspects of the Irish Question*.

teacher, who thus becomes the slave of the priest, who, in his turn, is the lackey of the bishop. If you complain of these things you are a profane person; to criticize the schools is to critize religion.

Secondary education is not in much better plight, as we gather from official and other information. There is no proper connexion or official relation between the primary and secondary system; and the Church uses funds, entrusted to her keeping for technical instruction, to support ecclesiastical seminaries and other purely clerical institutions where education, as most people understand it, is quite a minor consideration. The secondary system is controlled by a Board —with lots of money to spend—whereof the members are carefully selected "on sectarian lines to satisfy the organized bigotries that we call religion rather than to make educational uses of the money." The clerics, of whatever denomination, lead the various groups. Theology is the basis of the whole thing; in the words of "Pat," a Catholic writer, "the creeds rise above the nation, so that the money meant for education goes to accommodate sectarianism and turn Christianity into strife." The laity, as in Quebec, care nothing about education in the true sense of that much-abused word, because nobody troubles to teach them its essential value. On the Catholic side the intermediate schools and their funds are almost wholly controlled by the Church. The teachers' salaries are beggarly—lower than those in the primary schools. The system turns its youthful victims into "grant-earning machines, at the expense of health, character, and intellect"; the educational average is very low, and the methods employed often actually degrading.

A Reform Association pamphlet asserted that cramming is the best feature of the system, and sometimes the teachers are supplied with the questions which the examiners intend to ask. Many of the children have been forced to hand back to the teachers the amount of their prizes; the prize-winners might have parents who would take and misspend the money, so the Church gets it!

In the Catholic University, wholly under clerical direction of course, the curriculum, with its basis of theology, would probably make Oxford or Cambridge weep; but it is at least an improvement on the schools. When the infant prodigy was beginning its career in 1851 Newman was invited to become its first Rector. He accepted the post with hesitation, and not without misgivings as to the trials and troubles before him. His pathetic attempts to convince the episcopal managers that literature ought not to be left out of education—mark the words—are recorded in his published works. "A University is not a convent," he plaintively exclaimed; "it is not a seminary; it is a place to fit men of the world for the world." His energies were spent in vain: he might as well have spoken to the east wind. For five years he struggled on gamely, but clerical stupidity and inertia proved too much for him, and he returned, a saddened and disillusioned man, to England. To-day the Irish Catholic who wants to finish his education according to modern, rather than mediæval, standards goes to Trinity, Dublin.

Clericalism in Ireland, as in other countries, is a terrible drain upon the scanty resources of the country, though the material loss it occasions is

nothing compared with the tax it levies on the spiritual and intellectual welfare of the people. Innumerable churches, cathedrals, presbyteries, and the incomes of those who serve them, swallow up a mint of money; £5,000,000 a year are said to be "lifted from the Irish people by the innumerable agencies of clerical suction which are at work upon all parts of the Irish body, politic and social," and it is stated on good authority that the large majority of the secular clergy do not pay a penny of income-tax. Maynooth alone is estimated to pocket £2,000,000 from the State; and I cannot conceive a worse way in which the money of a poor country could be spent. From birth to the grave the layman is ever paying out money to the Church, with no account rendered; nobody knows where all the money goes. Baptisms, churchings, burials, and other smaller matters are the occasion of fees, and when the poor believer is dead, masses for his soul bring more grist to the ecclesiastical mill. Offerings, presents, subscriptions are wheedled or bullied out of the peasants to build churches, provide clerical functions of all sorts, and to maintain suitable ecclesiastical pomp. The priest often acts as family lawyer, and obligingly makes the laymen's wills, especially in the case of old people in failing health and with money to leave. One judge suggested that priests should be forbidden to act as lawyers and make people's wills.*

Marriage in Ireland is terribly expensive. "Why don't you get married, Pat?" said a friend of mine, a few years ago, to a western peasant. "Sure I can't afford it, your honour; it would cost me £5 to get married. Mike Malony over there (pointing to a

* See *Economics for Irishmen*, p. 153.

neighbouring farm) had to pay £20—a pound a cow." The priest's fees are regulated in ratio to the number of acres or the amount of stock the parties possess, and much haggling * sometimes takes place between the bridegroom and the priest, the latter usually getting the best of it. All these doles, fees, and subscriptions are wrung from a reluctant people by what practically amounts to religious intimidation ; the people dare not affront men who can ruin their material interests in this world, and who are credited with some mysterious, but potent, influence over their fate in the great hereafter. Terrorism is the rule of life : better pay up, and have done with it.

It is a melancholy picture which impartial observers draw of present-day Ireland, and one could only wish that the character and attainments of those who draw it, added to one's own personal knowledge and experience, did not forbid the supposition that the picture is exaggerated. Æ, poet and organizer, idealist and practical agriculturist, mystic and man of affairs, is certainly not given to hyperbolic language or views ; yet his works, despite their charm of manner and style, often make very sad reading. In his book, *Co-operation and Nationality*, a graphic presentment of Ireland's tragedy, the priest, strange to say, has no place : the author supplies the facts, and his readers are largely left to make their own inferences. I suggest, however, with all respect, that writers who thus spare religious sentiment are evading a vital issue and missing the real root of much grave evil. It has

* "Do it for £13, Father."—"No, I won't marry you under £16."—"Split the difference, Father," etc. etc. (*The Pope's Green Island*, by W. P. Ryan, p. 82).

been suggested that Ireland perishes through her inherent incapacity, but this is surely wrong. Irishmen are not inherently incapable, but many of them are rendered incapable by never getting a dog's chance of being anything else. Mazzini said that Ireland had no claim to the title of nation because she had no special function in the world; and Mommsen also had strong views on the matter—but Mommsen must not be mentioned in these days. No nation, no individual, can have a special function in the world until they acquire a mind and will of their own: at present we have the melancholy spectacle of the Irish population, enslaved by drink and gombeen, its soul ensnared in the pits dug for it by clericalism, sinking unnecessarily into decay. One's heart bleeds for those poor Irish peasants who so contentedly hug their spiritual chains, while fretting at the artificially stimulated, and largely imaginary, gall of British citizenship, which Scotland patiently endures without hurt or inconvenience.

As to the more important facts there is practical unanimity. In congested Ireland the gombeen kings and queens rule. They are all publicans, says Æ, and their friends are all strong drinkers. "All the local appointments are in their gift, and hence you get drunken doctors, drunken rate-collectors, drunken J.P.'s, drunken inspectors—in fact round the gombeen system reels the whole drunken congested world, and underneath this revelry and jobbery the unfortunate peasant labours and gets no return for his labour." "The individual cowers before the priest," says the out-and-out Home Ruler, Mr. Brooks, who treats Mother Church less tenderly, "and the whole conduct of life is scaled down to a turbulent level of greed,

languor, intimidation, inefficiency, falsity, and superstition." Mr. Brooks also speaks of the charming Irish habit of never being to blame for anything. How far the individual Irishman is to blame for his deplorable condition it is not for me to say, but I do know who are the people chiefly to blame. What the Irishman lacks is a *self*-developed character, a sense of personal responsibility, and an unfettered intelligence; and he is denied the chance of acquiring these three indispensables. He respects his priest—overmuch, in my opinion: let him rather learn to respect himself. Of life in the county towns and their neighbourhoods—the deadly drabness of it all, "the unbearable meanness," the absence of any true social life or intellectual interest, the drunkenness, and sordid, unpicturesque poverty and uncleanliness—those who have seen these things do not need to be reminded. The towns, full of churches and drink-shops, are little centres of mental decay: "they create no wealth," says Æ, "they generate no civic virtues, certainly they manifest none." The "public opinion" of the town or village is the opinion of the priest. In the country districts there is no joy of life. "There is not a redeeming feature" in Connemara; "there is beauty of earth, mountain, sky, and water, but no beauty in life." The forbidding sights in more populous Mayo and Roscommon are similarly described by Mr. Michael McCarthy in his instructive *Priests and People in Ireland*. All refinement is lacking, the arts of life simply do not exist, as they do, in spite of great poverty, among many peasant communities in foreign lands. Connemara "is the distant and desert verge of humanity far beyond the borders of civilization." One knows, too, how rural

amenities are discouraged by the priests; how, whip in hand, he drives home the boys and girls dancing together at the cross-roads in the summer evenings; how the Church makes the body the foe of the spirit, love and gaiety a snare of the Devil, sees in life a thing full of "sin, and the suspicion of sin," and in the human body a nasty impure thing that has to be suppressed. It is this miserable fear of human nature, and of woman's spells in particular, which breeds the gloomy cynicism, the pessimism, and self-distrust natural to a people who are taught *not* to rely on themselves, but to put their souls in trust with another man and to let others do their thinking for them. One result, I suppose, of this priestly war on lovers is the prevalence of those loveless, purely mercenary marriages which disfigure Irish life. The parties chaffer over the sacred contract as though they were buying pigs at a country fair; the whole thing is treated as merely a business transaction. "Pat" tells a story how a priest remonstrated with an ancient widower who was about to take unto himself a very young wife. "O sure, your riverince," the hoary reprobate replied, "if I don't marry, I'll have to buy an ass."

In Ireland social and communal life is vitiated at its sources, and it is the statesman's business to find out the real origins of the mischief. "The devil's game with men," Æ says, "is to divide and conquer them. . . . Fine character in a race is evolved and not taught. It is not due to copy-book headings or moral maxims given to the youth of the country. It arises from the structure of society and the appeal it makes to them"; and he also tells us that a race which does not evolve its own ideals of society, culture, and

industry, has no right to call itself a nation at all. Wise words and true: but who is it that plays that devil's game everywhere and always, and nowhere more so than in Ireland? We certainly want to make the people do something for themselves besides "begging for doles"; but until they are allowed, and taught, to do things for themselves, to kill their pigs and make their butter without priestly meddling, to use their own brains and develop their own character, the case is a hopeless one. By all means let us build up that new social order that Æ desires, but the people must learn to do their own building, or the edifice will not stand. State spoon-feeding may be as bad as he says it is: clerical spoon-feeding is a great deal worse. If we have to deplore "the utter destruction of self-reliance, initiative, and independence of spirit," the reason of this destruction must be sought, I think, in the books of outspoken Catholics like "Pat," or Mr. McCarthy, rather than in those of the more reticent and sympathetic Æ. We must indeed "break up the evil and petty isolation of man from man"—not only in Ireland, but also in Canada and other portions of the Empire where the Church is powerful—but a necessary preliminary is to stop the shepherding of the people in "separate sectarian concentration camps," and generally to break up the system that creates isolation and parochialism.

Nobody suggests that "religion" is the only cause of Ireland's mental and social disorders. Drink, politics, grazing, gombeen, clumsy and unsympathetic government and State spoon-feeding are all factors in the problem, but the main root of the evil is clerical obscurantism and all that it entails. The Church, no

longer able to kill or maim the heretic's body, has to content herself with deadening man's mind and personality. Where there is no vision the people perish. Life is a more important thing than adherence to any particular form of religious belief; and it is the lack of life, in any true sense of the word, which the Irish people suffer from, and which drives the boys and girls to seek it in "the trip abroad" so justly dreaded by the clerics. The object of true religion, as of civilization in general, should be to create the best type of man possible; but you cannot achieve this object by dwelling exclusively on one side of man's nature. "Human life is a chain," as Æ says: religion is one of the links, but by no means the only one, and the sort of religion they give people in Ireland does not tend to make of them intelligent or social beings. The intellectual confusion, the gross and often degrading superstition, which prevail in the island do not all spring from Rome, but they are approved, or at least winked at, by a Church which finds an ignorant, goblin-obsessed population easier to rule. Illiterate humanity loves now, as in the past, to have gods of its own creation, and the thaumaturgist from Maynooth naturally does not oppose beliefs which bolster up his authority. To counteract his natural deficiencies he encourages the people to look on him as a wizard or medicine-man with miraculous powers and supernatural endowments; the Church teaches the people to think that she is necessary to their salvation, and that the priest is an indispensable mediator with the powers above. Romanism is a religion of magic: why should its ministers not be magicians?

The position is rendered still more intolerable by

the way in which religion in Ireland is thrust into all departments of life. Everything starts from a sectarian standpoint; some weird theological import is woven into the commonest everyday avocations, with the result that the Church has there succeeded in securing that complete and purely secular domination which Christ expressly repudiated. The politician, the bacon-curer, the co-operative storekeeper, must avoid all lapses into heresy while carrying on their businesses: they must obey the professional theologian, or else shut up shop. The standard of fitness is dogma, rather than efficiency: a workman's creed is more important than his skill in handling his tools, and heterodoxy and bacon-curing are pronounced incompatible.

Out of this welter of ignorance, poverty, extortion, intolerance, priestly tyranny and its resulting mental stupor, discontent and disorder inevitably arise. The underlying attitude of the Church towards the various political movements in Ireland during recent years is a matter of controversy. The probability is that she never really wanted Home Rule, just as now, being satisfied with her very comfortable and State-buttressed position, she certainly does not (as a Church) want Sinn Fein republicanism. Things could hardly be arranged in a way better calculated to maintain her power than they have been hitherto; they might easily become a great deal worse. Her aim is to prevent a settlement of any kind, to keep the national sore open, and suck profit out of the resulting confusion. When public opinion is palpably set in any given direction the hierarchy goes with the crowd, professing to lead when in reality it is only following, and gives out that

it is panting for the realization of the popular aim. The Catholic ecclesiastic is not always a Machiavelli, but he often likes to think he is, and conscientiously plays the part according to the best of his rather mediocre abilities. During the war the Irish bishops, particularly in their treatment of the self-government and conscription questions, showed considerable wisdom of the serpentine order. They coquetted with Sinn Fein, while abstaining from committing themselves to its principles, and pleased the people by encouraging resistance to the law. The conscription issue was skilfully presented to the laity in ethical and non-political garb. They decided it, the Jesuit Father Finlay assures us,* " not as politicians, but as interpreters of the Divine law." None the less they afterwards felt themselves " bound " to give " clear instructions to their flocks," and this obligation apparently extended to matters of a less patently moral and religious character. They directed " their clergy to announce meetings " at which their flocks might pledge themselves to resist conscription ; and the Bishop of Kildare, with an eye to future developments, significantly remarked that they " naturally left it to the political leaders to determine what particular means would be the most effective at their disposal." This clerical double-shuffle between politics and morals is the reverse of impressive, and it did not impose upon patriotic and sagacious English Catholics. The Catholic Union of Great Britain, an influential body, issued an indignant protest, which they forwarded to the Pope ; but the Vatican refused to intervene, we are told, because it " does not interfere with bishops

* *Studies* for July 1918.

in *purely political matters* in their countries"! (my italics).

The Irish ecclesiastics claim to possess divine right to guide their flocks through the political maze. They ask, "Cannot a priest be an Irishman, too?" which practically means, "Cannot a priest also be a politician?" What people complain of is that the Irish hierarchy, while availing themselves of this licence, persist in pretending that, in their incursions into the political field, they are not engaged in ordinary party campaign tactics, but are acting as inspired teachers of morality guided by the Holy Spirit; and some of us are wondering what has become of those numerous assurances, made during the Home Rule debates in Parliament and elsewhere, that the vital guarantees of national defence and security would remain "unimpaired" in any case, that Ireland has equal obligations with Great Britain to defend the Empire, and that these and other similar obligations would be respected. We now know how much value must be attached to pledges, undertakings, and promised safeguards of this kind. The Irish Protestants will want something much more than mere assurances that they will not be unjustly treated by the Romish hierarchy in any future scheme of self-government.

Meanwhile, the younger priests are Sinn Feiners almost to a man. Maynooth and the new Catholic university, founded with British money, are hotbeds of sedition. The schools, entirely under priestly control, are made forcing-houses of disloyalty and racial ill-will. We pay for the children's education, and they are taught by their clerical instructors to hate us in return. Rome, itself a sort of religious Sinn Fein, has, by its

rigid policy of severance and isolation, prepared the ground for the seed of Sinn Fein, and one day it will reap the fruits. Its obscurantism has not only forbidden the citizen to say what he thinks, but made his thoughts a mere echo of another man's thoughts: the mental wealth of the country remains locked up in the Church's safe, and the priest, secure in his educational entrenchments, keeps the key. Yet the Church, the chief representative of the principle of authority, has even been described as becoming in Ireland, if she has not already become, under the stress of circumstances a revolutionary or Bolshevist organization. She is once more, in short, appearing in her familiar rôle of political wrecker.

What is going to be the outcome of it all no man can foresee. How is Ireland going to manifest her special function in the world, her spirit and her civilization? A national instinct that is bred by separatism out of hate does not seem likely to survive: economic and social forces will prove too strong for it in the end. The diet of folk-lore and philology, racial spite and sectarian exclusiveness, offered it by Sinn Fein, the Gaelic League, and the younger priests will not, I think, be found sustaining for long. A State is not likely to be much better than the individuals of which it is composed, and if, as we are told, these are in large measure men who are in a low state of intelligence and character, possess no corporate mind, and cannot therefore "truly be called citizens," the proposed Irish State will not amount to much. There is no inherent efficacy in a paper constitution: a parchment scroll cannot make a nation. The formation of character in the individual citizen is a necessary preliminary; and

slavery, whether physical or mental or moral, is destructive of character. Physically brave, the Irish, in the words of a Catholic peer, Lord Denbigh, suffer from a "fatal lack of individual moral courage." They are wanting in personality, and the reason is obvious. We cannot populate "the desert depths of the popular consciousness with real thought" until the people are allowed the free use of their intellects: if the minds of a naturally gifted race are now empty deserts we must remove the primary causes which make them deserts. The religious question is habitually shirked in discussions on Ireland, but it has got to be faced. Lord Beaconsfield rightly said that "the power of a foreign priesthood" was a danger to the State; and we must not forget that the priests took a large share in working up the popular agitation which culminated in the bloodshed of 1916. Incapable of creating, the Church can yet disturb, darken, and obstruct. "Let us go forward in darkness," said the mystic Molinos (who thought it best neither to read nor think), "and we shall go well; the horse that goes round blindfolded grinds corn so much the better"; and the Church still follows this fatal policy of shutting out the light. Whether self-government would impede or hasten the limitation of the Church's power in Ireland is a much-debated question which is outside my present scope. One thing, however, can be said with confidence—there can be no hope for that unfortunate country until the clerical incubus is removed. The Irish must work out their own redemption individually: political salvation, unlike the salvation of Roman theology, cannot be gained passively or vicariously.

CHAPTER VII

QUEBEC: A STUDY IN MEDIÆVALISM

The Tragedy of Quebec (Robert Sellar).

IT may possibly disconcert some people to hear Canada spoken of as a home of mediævalism: they find it hard to believe that a large part of the great, go-ahead Western Dominion is still a sort of Papal preserve, a home of reactionary and obscurantist clericalism that would have done credit to the times of Boniface VIII. That the principles of the Syllabus should actuate the real rulers of a Province of the British Empire in the twentieth century may sound an incredible proposition, but it is nevertheless true. Canada in these respects furnishes us with an object-lesson: her history points a moral for the Empire at large, to which Englishmen will, if they are wise, pay due heed. Before, however, entering on my main theme I am reluctantly compelled to preface my remarks with a few observations of a personal nature. My attitude in these matters is not, as has been suggested, that of a "Toronto Orangeman" *: I am merely an Englishman who has made

* The February *Month*, also, commenting on some correspondence in the *Saturday Review*, denounced me as "an Orange fanatic" engaged in "advertising a preposterous no-Popery book"—which, by the way, I had not written! On the other hand, an able and courteous opponent, Dr. Francis Grey, a Canadian ex-Senator, stated that my charges against the Quebec Church were not answered "for the reason that they are, in his case, in a very real sense, unanswerable."

three trips to Canada (aggregating nearly a year), and who is a close student of Canadian affairs. My views, therefore, whether right or wrong, are nothing more than those of the keenly interested looker-on—who is also said to see most of the game—and they are, at any rate, wholly free from partisan, racial, or sectarian bias. I confess to feeling, as most Englishmen feel, keenly disappointed that the French-Canadians should as a body—though with certain splendid exceptions—have failed so signally in their duty to their two Mother Countries during the war; but I fully admit the validity of the plea that they were not free agents, and that, if they had not been misled by their priests, they would have given a much better account of themselves.

A voyage up or down the St. Lawrence (the writer has made it several times) between the ocean and Montreal is an interesting experience which leaves a lasting impression on the mind. Ascending the royal river the great Atlantic liner anchors under the guardian heights of Quebec, an outlying rampart of feudalism, crowned with its noble citadel and hallowed by stirring memories of British and Canadian prowess. Leaving the picturesque city the steamer, winding in and out between the forests and mountains, completes her voyage to Montreal, and one has the impression of slowly moving through a dead land. The spirit of mediævalism seems to be hovering around: "You sort of feel it in your bones," as an American put it. A few "shacks" (log cabins) and white-roofed houses and villages dotted about here and there, with an excessive proportion of churches, break the monotony of the landscape; but nature seems asleep, and the

evidences of man's activities are few and far between. A few days later, as the C.P.R. takes the westbound traveller across the wide prairie, the scene changes. The population may be equally scanty, but on either side are signs of human life, of human energy and industry: and the disparity between the conditions in the two sections of country cannot wholly be explained by differences of soil and climate. I now propose to give a short sketch of the forces which have been at work for three centuries in the Province of Quebec, and of their influence to-day on the destinies of the great Dominion.

Let me begin by pointing out that the Roman Church in Quebec has enjoyed under British rule greater powers and privileges than it was ever accorded under the rule of the French. The Gallican Church, which prevailed in France during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, allowed supremacy to Rome in the domain of faith, but gave the Pope plainly to understand that in temporal concerns the Papacy had no voice. Louis XIV and Louis XV * would never have allowed the religious Orders in Quebec Province the extraordinary licence and privileges which, from their modest beginnings under the Treaty of Paris in 1763, have been continually enlarged under successive indulgent Governments. Much of the legislation in favour of the Church was obtained by log-rolling, wire-pulling, and more direct personal inducements, as well as by what Mr. Sellar (who is very severe on the Protestant Ontario Members from 1861 to 1867) calls

* For numerous examples of the stringent edicts issued by these monarchs with a view to curbing the pretensions of the Church and the Orders, see *The Tragedy of Quebec*, third edition, p. 247, by Robert Sellar.

" the miserable devices of shifty politicians " ; and the privileges thus obtained have been grossly abused. The Church has encroached more and more on the State's domain, frequently overpassing the limits of the law, and to her meddling in public and private life there seems no end. Certain writers, lay and clerical, Catholic and High Church Anglican, object to the phrase " ecclesiastical pretensions," so I will give a few samples, mostly culled from recent actions and pronouncements of the Quebec episcopate, showing what people in Canada mean by the words. They make it quite clear that we are not here dealing with dead issues, interesting only to students, as so many people wrongly imagine, but with very live political problems. The Church still makes no secret of her claim to stand above the State, she loses no opportunity even in these days of asserting her freedom from control by the civil power in matters vital to the public welfare. We cannot sufficiently admire the naïve candour of the Bishop of Trois Rivières, who pointed out to his flock that " a constitutional Government, by entrusting full legislative power to a Parliament, places a very dangerous weapon in the hands of its members " ! But the worthy prelate only spoke the mind of his Church. A collective Episcopal Pastoral issued in 1896 described the Church as " sovereign in itself and standing above the State," and the right of bishops to dictate to the citizen his voting was clearly indicated : " It is not the Church that is comprised in the State ; it is the State that is comprised in the Church." The Bishop of Rimouski told a correspondent that if he voted according to his conscience, and against the order of his bishop, he would sin grievously and render himself

unworthy of the Sacraments. The bishop's predecessor asserted that the refusal of the Sacraments in connexion with voting was a perfectly legal proceeding: to say the contrary was false and opposed to the teaching of the Church. Another prelate said that it was useless for a Catholic to attempt to resist, for if he did so, and disobeyed the hierarchy, he ceased to be a Catholic.* Sir A. T. Galt, the representative of the Quebec minority in the debates on the Confederation Act in 1867 (which he supported), cites in a pamphlet, quoted by Mr. Sellar, several instances of the dangers which menaced that minority. A Quebec judge laid it down as law that, since priests belong to a special order, they were above the law and beyond the jurisdiction of the courts. The annotator of the Quebec Statutes inserted in the marginal notes, "The decrees of the Pope are binding." † A Government once had the temerity to introduce a Bill to amend the Education Act. The Archbishop of Quebec sent for the Premier and expressed his disapproval and indignation at its introduction without his being first consulted. The Bill was promptly dropped, and the Archbishop extracted a promise, which is still observed, that before any measure affecting education was introduced, it should be submitted to him and obtain his approval. In 1888 the Ultramontane-Nationalist Premier of Quebec, M. Honoré Mercier, brought forward a measure which gave the Jesuits a large money compensation in lieu of their lands which had been confiscated at the time of the British Conquest.‡ Before introducing the

* See *The Race Question in Canada*, by a thoroughly impartial French writer, M. André Siegfried.

† *The Tragedy of Quebec*, p. 178.

‡ *The History of Canada*, by Hugh E. Egerton, M.A., p. 332.

Bill Mercier visited Rome and submitted his proposition to the Pope, who ratified it: the preamble to the Bill recognized the Pope's authority, and Mercier during the debate reminded the Catholic Members that their allegiance was due first to the head of their Church, and that the Pope had approved of the resolution before them: if they did not make restitution to the Church the members of the Government and the Legislature would expose themselves to spiritual penalties. In 1867 certain members declined to support Confederation until the scheme had been submitted to the Pope and received his approval. In 1899 the Marchand Liberal Ministry wanted to introduce certain reforms designed to strengthen the State's control over educational matters. "The Church's opposition," says M. Siegfried, "was downright and decisive: a *telegram* [my italics] from Rome called upon Marchand to abandon the idea," and even a Liberal Premier had to give way! The Archbishop of Montreal told his flock in 1896 that "the sovereign Pontiff gives it as a rule to follow" that the elector must vote as the *Vatican* and his bishops tell him. I give only a few samples, but they suffice to show the sort of thing which non-Catholic Canadians are up against: they also prove that the spiritual weapons wielded by Rome to-day are by no means the mere "rusty tools" they are commonly supposed to be.

The Church's chief instrument of consolidating and increasing her power in Quebec, as everywhere else, is education, and the school has therefore become the chief bone of contention, the great prize to be struggled for by the opposing forces. The French-Canadian Episcopate has always followed the Roman tradition in

asserting the Church's right to have complete control over the schools and what is taught in them. The Papal Syllabus of 1870 affirms that "if any one says that all direction of the public schools must be confided to the hands of the civil authority . . . let him be accursed." The Archbishop of Quebec, interpreting the Syllabus, laid it down that the Church, "by its divine institution, must have to itself alone the direction of the schools," even in the teaching of the natural sciences! The priests control all the Catholic schools in the Province, with the results that we see in Ireland and every other country where Rome holds sway. Mr. W. H. Moore, the author of *The Clash*, an able statement of the Catholic case, gives us some fairly reassuring statistics as to the attendance at these schools, but there do not appear to be any separate figures for the benighted rural districts, and he does not greatly enlighten us as to the quality of the education provided. Most authorities, including Goldwin Smith and the judicious Frenchman, M. Siegfried, give a most distressing account of the results obtained, and Mr. Sellar states that a majority of the country people cannot read, and only a few can write. Goldwin Smith said that the mayor of a town could not always write, and he quotes a French-Canadian journalist of eminence to the effect that not one man in twenty in a rural district could read, and not one in fifty could write.* The rural school committees consist of worthy but ignorant peasants; many of the teachers are without diplomas, and in 1907 there were 4331 uncertificated lay teachers belonging to religious Orders. The committees grumble at paying women teachers

* *Canada and the Canadian Question* (1891), p. 13.

500 francs a year: 350 francs is a not uncommon salary (it is sometimes as low as 200), and this is said to be often too much, having regard to their qualifications. They teach the catechism, preparation for the first communion, the doctrine, ritual, and liturgy of the Roman Church, but little else. Small wonder that the poor *habitant* cannot compete with his more fortunate Protestant rivals, or that a deputation from the Montreal Trades Council interviewed the Quebec Premier in 1916 and told him that "all the good positions are held by Protestants because of the imperfect education of the rural French-Canadians, and their inability to speak English." What better evidence could we have of the fact that the Roman Church acts, not only as a factor of disunion, but as a blight on the mental and moral development of the unlucky beings committed to her care, and that her deficiencies in this respect are gravely detrimental to the Empire and the world at large?

Nor, when he emerges from the pupil stage, does the French-Canadian escape the benumbing influence on mind and will of Papal sacredotalism. All higher education, literature, the Press, and the theatre are under clerical censorship. Madame Sarah Bernhardt, visiting her compatriots in Montreal, found herself and her plays banned by its bishops, and was saluted by the submissive faithful with showers of stones and eggs. Freedom of thought, speech, and even conscience is suppressed; general ignorance is studiously fostered as a buttress to clerical authority; and, as we know to our cost, the weight of this obscurantist power was flung, with disastrous results, against us and our Allies during the war. The Quebec clergy have an "Index"

of their own, which bans the works of such authors as Renan, De Musset, and Zola, and many less questionable books and articles by people adjudged guilty of "immoral [that is, anti-Catholic] writings." Condemnation from the pulpit can ruin a book or a newspaper. "We forbid the faithful of our diocese to sell, buy, read, or keep this newspaper, the *Débats*," said the Archbishop of Montreal; and the poor *Débats* (of Quebec) disappeared under the interdict. Even so sterling a periodical as the *Revue des Deux Mondes* was condemned in the clerical Press. Membership of a literary and scientific society, the "Institut Canadien," and the reading of its Annual, was condemned by the Pope under penalty of the deprivation of Sacraments. Theology is made a test of fitness for secular occupations. For instance, Quebec medical students might learn a good deal about medicine in Paris, but progressive France must be avoided as a centre of corruption and impiety, and the knowledge which the budding Galens of the Dominion might acquire there would be too dearly purchased at the cost of weakening their faith. The "trip abroad," with its enlightening influences, is discouraged in Quebec no less than in Ireland. Better far be attended by an inferior physician with sound theological views than by a heretic who knows his job thoroughly. Similarly, as we have seen, in Ireland orthodoxy is a prime qualification for a pig-killer, and a butter-maker's religious opinions are accounted by the Church as more important than his skill in making butter; indeed, the analogy between the conditions prevailing in Ireland and Quebec is complete almost throughout.

Reading about these things, or discussing them

with Canadian friends, one rubs one's eyes and wonders whether the facts do not relate to some petty Italian province under a Pope of the Church's halcyon Middle Age, instead of to a thriving Dominion of the modern progressive West. The immoral bargain which the British Government made with the Roman Church in Ireland has been made also in Canada. The State in each country has surrendered its authority in many vital matters to the clerics, in consideration of the latter keeping the people submissive and quiet. The superficial advantages of the system are obvious, but such cowardly abdication by a Government of its essential rights only postpones the inevitable day of reckoning. Meanwhile the people and the country suffer greatly, and the more progressive sections of the population end by rising furiously against clerical domination. Fierce and protracted squabbling, which at times has brought the Dominion near the verge of civil war, has been the natural outcome in Canada. Ontario is now the chief battlefield, but the perilously embittered conflicts over the school question in Manitoba (1896), and in the North-West Provinces (1905), served to emphasize still more strongly the dangers of the present situation and the urgent need of a speedy settlement. The Protestants stand up for free, obligatory, undenominational education given in the English tongue, and clear of clerical control. The French-Canadians insist that Catholic doctrine shall be taught along with secular subjects, in the French language, and in schools set apart for them; and they demand that this teaching shall be subsidized by Protestants, to whom it is highly repugnant. The French say, quite truly, that Catholics have to con-

tribute to Protestant schools in Quebec, but they omit all reference to the fact that there is no parallel between the two cases, and that when Mother Church secured—under the British North America Act of 1867—subsidized separate schools for Catholics in Ontario at the cost of contributing to Protestant schools in Quebec, she got, as usual, very much the best of the bargain. The Protestant schools in Quebec are *public* schools, undenominational to all intents and purposes, and wholly unsectarian in aim. If, as I believe is the case, the Quebec Catholics ungrudgingly pay their share of the State subsidies to Protestant schools it is because they know that it is to the interest of the Province that the people who contribute most to its material prosperity should have a sound education; and they also know that the schools are not used for proselytizing or other objectionable purposes.

The French schools in Ontario, on the other hand, are separate schools—rightly so termed, because they are inimical to unity and foster separatism: they are purely Church schools wholly controlled by the clergy, and, being used by the priests as instruments for spreading the Church's influence, they become forcing-houses of sectionalism with all its harmful consequences. Canadians say that they serve to erect partition-walls between the races, to keep the children apart from Protestant children, and to hinder that unification which is the patriot's aim and the country's most vital need. They strangle sound education, "drill the rising generation in the doctrines and practices of a sect"; and non-Catholic Canadians protest against being forced to contribute towards instruction of this very undesirable kind, which runs counter to all their most

cherished hopes and ideals. The conflict at present rages round Regulation 17 of the Ontario School Code —a somewhat dry topic, but one fraught with momentous issues—which determined the use of French as the language of instruction and communication in the separate, but subsidized, schools of the Province. While insisting that English is to be the main language used in teaching, the regulation provides that instruction may also, in certain circumstances, be given in French. In a sense, therefore, the Regulation established bilingual schools for French children, but insisted that they should be taught English. It is alleged against the French clericals that, while pretending to be satisfied with bilingual teaching, they are really seeking to oust English and make French the language used in their schools. The Frenchmen say that their national language and customs are being endangered, and that Regulation 17 virtually proscribes French for purposes of all general education, and that "the suppression of their language is a blow aimed at the race and the sanctities of hearth and home." Ontario Protestants reply that bilingualism is an impediment to national union, that the priests are using the bogy of danger to national customs and language as a means of thrusting sectarianism into the free and undenominational school system which the people favour, and of bolstering up one particular form of religious opinion. They argue, further, that, as English is the language of the British Empire and of 110,000,000 inhabitants of North America, it ought also to be the one State, or official, language of the Dominion. Enlightened French Canadians are in accord with this view, and M. Taschereau, Minister of Labour and Public Works in

Quebec, advised his fellow-countrymen the other day to cease fighting about "bilingual cant," and to turn their attention towards educating their children in English. Ontario also complains of priestly proselytizing, pamphleteering, and other mischief-making; she declares that the State has no right to constitute itself judge of spiritual truth and religious belief, or to grant special privileges to a particular sect; that Roman Catholic teaching is exclusive and reactionary, and turns out inefficient citizens; and, lastly, that if the French-Canadians want teaching of this kind they ought at any rate to pay for it themselves.

The only rational way out of the *impasse* would seem to lie through a purely undenominational school system everywhere outside the Province of Quebec. Denominational agreements never work smoothly; people always fight over their interpretation. The secular school works well in America: Catholics are fairly content with it there, and give their children religious instruction in private institutions or the home. One thing alone seems certain: Canada must, by one means or another, put an end to the present intolerable state of strife and bickering which is a perpetual menace to the unity and welfare of the Dominion. The war has given Canadians, as it has given other nations and individuals, a broader outlook on national and individual life. Canada hopes to see all her sons rise above the narrow particularism, the isolation, and obscurantism which seem inseparable from Romanism, and to terminate the eternal squabbling which is the inevitable outcome of sectarian prejudice. She wants all classes and creeds in her vast territories to have a proper education, their spiritual and mental faculties

to be fully developed, so that each and all may play a patriot's part in the great world-drama of to-day. She looks forward to the time when they shall have outgrown the petty feuds and rivalries of the past, and a united nation shall march onwards, as one man, intent upon the nobler victories which yet remain to be won. But before this great ideal is attained many obstacles must be removed, and much out-of-date machinery has got to be scrapped. A modern State cannot tolerate a Pope or a Church dictating (whether by telegraph or otherwise) to its Legislatures or statesmen on matters of purely domestic or foreign policy, pursuing within its borders the mischievous plan of governing men by dividing them, or compelling its citizens under threats of purgatorial pains to perform their civic duties at the bidding of an alien hierarchy.

I do not for a moment say that there have not been, or that there may not be still, faults on both sides which have contributed to the present trouble. The Orangeman is not always a particularly pleasant person (my Catholic friends think I am an Orangeman !), and his attitude towards the French minority is sometimes the reverse of conciliatory. As the stronger party, Protestants can afford to be generous—if only the Church does not, by its conduct, make generosity impossible. The talk about " racial arrogance " is, in my opinion, greatly exaggerated. No sensible person in these days feels racially arrogant towards our gallant Allies, the French : if Ontario is occasionally supercilious towards the *habitant* it is not because he is French (he comes of good old Norman stock), but because he is illiterate and undeveloped. Mr. Sellar, who is alleged to have (like the writer) the " Toronto

Orangeman's attitude," is emphatic on this point. Educate the English boy, he says, as the French boy is educated, and we should see that race has little to do with it. "Both peoples are essentially the same: it is the black robes who stand between kindred peoples." * Even in Quebec, M. Siegfried says, "the situation is exactly that of two separate nations kept apart by a definite frontier and having as little intercourse as possible: that is the price of the peace which prevails in the schools of Quebec."

Every nation in these days, if it would endure and prosper, must seek peace and ensue it: it must preserve unity or perish. Communities of men and women insulated, according to the dogmas they respectively favour, in denominational compartments, do not fit in with the democratic scheme: everything tending to perpetuate divisions must be combated resolutely. Canadian Ultramontanes and Jesuits must be induced to abandon the warfare which, from the Treaty of Paris onwards, they have waged against their Protestant fellow-creatures. In the old days the Jesuits launched their Indian converts in scalping-parties against the Puritan New-Englanders, connived at the torture of prisoners, and gave liberal bounties for heretic scalps. "You burn your enemies: God does the same," they said to the red fiends whom they egged on to the work of slaughter. The Protestant farmer at his plough, "the Puritan maid tripping her way to the church on the hill," were shot or tomahawked freely by these "converts to Christianity," who acted on the orders of the holy men who converted them. Let it be added that the Puritans were forced,

* *The Tragedy of Quebec*, p. 273.

in self-defence, to retaliate in kind. Men saw, like Dante, "the face of Heaven with shame o'erspread." The same internecine warfare is carried on to-day between the rival creeds, though with more civilized methods and weapons; but we may be permitted to hope that this truly deplorable state of things is not irremediable. The language barrier could be easily surmounted, the gap formed by racial prejudice bridged, with a little give-and-take on either side. Unhappily the unifying spirit is lacking in the priesthood. Not without reason do the Quebec ecclesiastics dread the infusion of that larger national spirit which they know must be fatal to the secular sovereignty they have so long usurped: it would be a terrible thing for them if the *habitant* became more enlightened and fraternized like a sensible person with his Protestant neighbour. The Church, in Canada especially, is nowadays in a very uneasy position. Some seventeenth-century writer, if my memory serves me, described her as a latter-day Issachar (he made, and I make, no allusion to the animal which Issachar is said to resemble) couching down between two burdens, the spiritual and temporal power. Unfortunately, it is the second of these responsibilities, the one wholly outside her legitimate sphere, with which she is mainly preoccupied. The Jesuit-Ultramontanes, into whose hands she has committed her destinies, are now busy guiding her down the road to ruin. In their narrow zeal for lording it over "a parish of bigots" they appear to have forgotten the true meaning of the word "Catholic." They cannot see that the world has no further use for the clerical strait-waistcoat.

CHAPTER VIII

THE PRIEST AND THE FAMILY

" If a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God ? " (1 Tim. iii. 5).

In the preceding chapters we have dealt with the workings of the Roman Church in the wider sphere of international affairs, of political and commercial life: let us now consider her disintegrating tendencies in the family circle. Cardinal Bourne, in the Lenten Pastoral to which allusion has already been made, confesses the deepest sympathy with the sufferings of the British workman from " bureaucratic interference in family life " ; yet if ever there was a bureaucracy in this world it is the Vatican, and there never were such meddlers in family life as the Roman priests. " They feel painfully that family is denied them, and they console themselves only by troubling ours," says Michelet; the priest penetrates the penitent's soul, simply but scientifically, with the aid of revelations obtained from servants, friends, and relatives; and so, deciphering instinct and sentiment, makes himself master of the situation. The marred lives and embittered souls of those who have suffered at the hands of Roman proselytizers and other clerical meddlers in private affairs, bear eloquent witness to the truth of the great French historian's burning words. Nothing in the home is sacred for the ecclesiastic sapper of domestic harmony. Earthly ties, even those of the

most intimate character, are deemed apt to prove a hindrance to the Church's interests, and must be subordinated to the claims of dogmatic religion. "God does not allow shares." To break up attachments, to sunder the ties of kindred, to undermine human authority, in the home no less than in the State, is to do the Church's work, and therefore the work of God. The Jesuit training, says Tyrrell, who was himself a member of the Order for many years, tells men that "the love of God does not perfect, but destroys, all natural feeling for relations and friends." * According to Michelet, the kindly St. François de Sales sometimes took compassion on the poor husband; but he did not scruple to induce Madame de Chantal to abandon her six young children, and take the veil. This is one among many instances of the terrible injury which may be done to the family by the priest

The empire of Rome is primarily an empire of the soul. He who rules men's souls rules everything. The rest is easy; the extension of this spiritual dominion to the sphere of material things was natural and inevitable. The vital mainstay of ecclesiastical authority has always been the spiritual guidance or, as it came to be called in the seventeenth century, the "direction" of individuals by the priests; and the institution of the director, the confessor (usually a Jesuit) who acted as trustee to the penitent in spiritual affairs, was one of Rome's greatest achievements in its efforts to obtain dominion over the hearts of men and women. To trace the institution from its modest beginnings in the late Middle Ages to its highest development in the seventeenth century would be far

* *Autobiography*, ii, 492.

beyond the scope of this book—even Michelet's immortal work only touches the fringe of the subject, being more concerned with the workings of the system than with its history. The large majority of persons subject to directorial tutelage consisted, as we know, of women; and the Church has always been very touchy on this point, because an assault here was an assault against her innermost stronghold. The priest not only directed women, he was also the protector of women—married women in particular—and this protective function, while it infuriated the husbands and fathers, served to establish the priest's right to meddle in family affairs upon an indestructible basis. The confessor is not only priest, but judge and physician *; the penitent is considered in the confessional to give a licence to the confessor that he may avail himself of whatever knowledge is necessary for his own (the penitent's) better direction (*ad sui meliorem directionem*); and the seal of the confessional does not preclude a confessor from using information, gained from penitents, as a guide to his actions in dealing with family matters.† This may in itself sound unobjectionable, but it obviously places a very dangerous weapon in the priest's hands.

The director's office, be it observed, is much wider than the confessor's; he has a twofold capacity, that of confessor (with its manifold functions) and of spiritual guide. In his directorial capacity he always had a much larger scope than when acting merely as confessor: for one thing, as confessor the Church bound him to secrecy, while as director he could talk

* See Liguori's *Moral Theology*, vi, 653.
† *Ibid.*, vi, 657.

as much as he liked. As confessor, Michelet points out, he was generally passive, listening much and speaking little, but as director he was all activity; to the confessor the penitent tells her sins, "she owes him nothing more; but to the director everything must be told." She not only entrusts him with her eternal salvation, but confides in him her temporal concerns, her domestic details, her business affairs, and, last but not least, her matrimonial troubles. In the Church's view it takes three parties to make a true marriage, husband, wife, and—the priest, who, as we have seen (p. 23) is the indispensable and divinely appointed mediator in the squabbles which the Church regards as inevitable between husband and wife—a sort of clerical King's Proctor intervening between the parties to see that things are managed in due order and in compliance with the Church's regulations. The devout wife, in Michelet's perhaps rather exaggerated view, thus possesses two husbands, who share the lady between themselves: one gets her body, the other gets her soul and thus really has the whole, as the husband, if he gets anything, only gets it by favour. In this way the director came to occupy a commanding position in the family *ménage*, a position which, as may well be imagined, not infrequently led to complications. His rule was stern—women are said to like stern men—but skilfully blended with clemency; he could pardon as well as condemn, relent with a graceful air, as though from sheer goodness of soul; and mercy, following threats of spiritual chastisement, seldom failed to win the penitent's heart. Nietzsche's Zarathrusta, in his anxiety to demonstrate the blond beast's superiority, advised male humanity not to forget the whip in its

dealings with womankind. The Jesuit director never forgot the whip—his system teaches that the soul is strengthened and purified under the lash ; but he knew well how to mingle severity with a protective kindliness, and the ladies appear to have found the application of the spiritual rod, followed by a benign clemency, quite irresistible.

The most striking and interesting story in the Church's annals of a spiritual attachment between two people of opposite sexes is probably that of St. François de Sales and Madame de Chantal. The direction of the intrepid mystic, Madame Guyon, by the subtle Fénelon forms a less fascinating narrative, because Fénelon, though a genius of high order and an accomplished bewitcher of souls, was in reality a thoroughpaced worldling, whose treatment of poor Madame de la Maisonfort makes painful reading ; and Versailles in the time of Louis XIV formed but an indifferent setting for a spiritual romance. The loves of St. François and Madame de Chantal have no such disenchanting accompaniments, and Michelet's graphic narrative of their attachment cannot be read without emotion. The lady—a much gentler and humbler creature than the somewhat haughty Madame Guyon, who had a very exalted opinion of her mission in the world—a blend of passion and devoutness (psychologists tell us that the two have the same basis in human nature), tortured by her love for her adored confessor, longed for death to end her sufferings and the " tempest of passion " which caused them. Fate, however, willed otherwise : her director died first, and legend tells how, ten years later, his tomb was opened and the body found entire. She obtained permission to touch

the saint's hand, "when, as if he had been alive, he drew her towards him and held her in a paternal and tender caress." They still preserve, as a double relic, the veil she wore on the occasion.

Attachments of this kind are probably much more common than is generally imagined—indeed, it would be strange were it otherwise. In many cases the mutual sympathy remains on the spiritual plane, but there is always the chance that the peculiar relationship of the penitent and her ghostly counsellor may subside gradually, almost insensibly, into one of a more intimate and tender character. As we shall see later, the Church's theologians are very eloquent on this rather delicate subject. In the sixteenth century, Michelet tells us, people had not yet learned to mingle gallantry and devotion; they indulged in them alternately, leaping by fits and starts, as it were, from God to the Devil, and vice versa. From the seventeenth century onwards they became enabled to do both at once, and, mingling the language of love with that of devotion, learned to speak them simultaneously. The directors had an unpleasant habit, I may remark—and the correspondence of some among their greatest men abundantly proves it—of interpreting sacramental and other spiritual mysteries in terms of physical passion. Systems and rules are not enough, as the Church knows very well, when you are dealing with human beings; you want a human personality behind to work them. Such a man was the director. Dogma plays a great part in the Roman system; man, the human man, a much greater. The director, or the confessor who is his modern representative, is a spiritual guide to the heavenly places: it is well to remember that he is also a man.

The clerical direction of the seventeenth century may no longer exist in its formal state, but the director's functions, as we are continually being reminded, are still freely exercised all over the world. The name has gone, but the thing remains; time and assiduity are all that is necessary to transform the confessor into the director. In Ireland, and other backward countries, the priest directs in politics, business, and a hundred other things; in the home circle he is everywhere dominant. The priest is delegated by the Church to keep an eye on domestic life; he claims to act as religious mentor and interpreter of divine mysteries, as family doctor in the spiritual sense, and as judge. He appears, therefore, in the character of a specialist in family matters, including those of a very intimate kind. Yet many of the things on which he has to advise and pass judgment are, or ought to be, a dead letter to him. He presumes to instruct mankind on life, while he is living himself divorced from life and in ignorance of it in its most vital aspects; but this does not prevent him from showering his advice upon husbands and wives. Those delightful "moral theologians," in particular, are full of instruction about certain things of which they may be presumed to have, at best, only a theoretical knowledge; and, as I pointed out before, it is noticeable that the director is very fond of using erotic images in order to render intelligible the mysteries of the Eucharist.

It will be seen, therefore, that the confessor or director is simply an amateur in these respects, badly coached by other amateurs, who gives unsolicited advice on matters about which he is supposed to know nothing. St. Paul, who was an eminently sensible

person, thought that a bishop should be a married man, one that ruleth well his own house; a deacon also ought to have a wife—but neither of them should have more than one. He did not want mere novices (1 Tim. iii. 6), lifted up with pride, meddling with matters they did not understand. That the "director" was already giving trouble in St. Paul's day seems evident from 2 Thess. iii. 11, where he speaks of people who are "working not at all, but are busybodies"; and from 2 Tim. iii. 6, where those persons are condemned who "creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth."

Yet in the face of these plain declarations of Scripture, Rome persists in maintaining a celibate clergy. Many attempts have been made to uproot a system so obviously disastrous in its results, but all have hitherto failed. In 1434 John, Bishop of Lübeck, proposed that clerical marriage should be *restored*; he pointed out that not one priest in a thousand was chaste, and that vice of the most varied and most reprehensible kind was rife amongst the clergy. His proposed reform was on the point of being carried, but certain tiresome old fellows who were past marrying age offered strenuous opposition (*quidam senes damnabant quod assequi non poterant*); and the religious Orders, who were bound by their vows of celibacy, objected to the seculars obtaining a privilege which was to be denied to themselves. "Hence a social evil of incalculable extent and complexity." *

* See *Studies in Modernism*, p. 332. The celibacy question in Czecho-Slovakia is causing the Vatican much anxiety. Thousands

The priest being wholly without experience in certain things about which the Church compels him to busy himself and to exercise his authority, it becomes necessary for him to receive instruction from teachers as ignorant as himself; and we have as a result what is probably the most atrocious system of education that exists in the world. The literature of the Roman Church abounds in manuals * of the most loathsome and disgusting character, written for the sole purpose of priming youthful priests with interrogatories, some of them upon subjects of a very obscene nature, to be administered by them in the confessional. To take one instance, the treatise "De Usu Matrimonii" in the *Moral Theology* of St. Alphonsus Liguori, Rome's great saint and leading luminary for confessors, the pride of the Church and the pillar of her existing ethical system, is a collection of literary ordure, mingled with the most depraved and childish superstition, which is unexampled in the books of any language with which I am acquainted. The sole object—there cannot possibly be any other—of imparting all this filthy knowledge to young priests is to enable the confessor or director to question penitents and their wives and daughters as to their actions, and also as to the thoughts they may harbour concerning the intimacies of married life—thoughts, probably, many of which had never occurred to them until they were suggested by the confessor,

of Czech priests have left the Church on that account; and the Holy See, by its Decree of January 15, 1920, excommunicated the Czech Church, which had already decided to cut itself adrift from Rome. The Decree has been described as "a confession of despair."

* I have just been reading one of the Maynooth manuals. Portions of it are indescribably disgusting, and equally futile for all practical purposes.

and the secret of which should, in any case, be held sacred by the parties immediately concerned.

It is true that Liguori begins by counselling discretion in administering these interrogatories, but he goes on to instruct confessors to ask women, among other things, whether they have comported themselves as modestly as possible, and whether they have been obedient to their husbands in all things (*obedientes viris in omnibus*).* People who are not Catholics protest against immature, half-educated youths being armed with powers to pry into these matters, and to extract information concerning the *arcana* of married life under threats of spiritual penalties. "A man," says St. Philip Neri, "who desires to grow in godliness should give himself up to a learned confessor, and be obedient to him as to God . . . the Lord will see to it that his confessor leads him not astray." He is followed by Cardinal Wiseman, and also by Liguori, who pledges himself that "none shall fail of salvation who observe this rule of obedience." † We see, therefore, how great is the priest's authority to invade family life down to its smallest details and its remotest corners.

Another of the Church's encroachments upon the domestic sphere is, so far as this country is concerned, of quite recent date; and a few words must be said on the serious state of affairs which has been brought about by the Papal attitude towards Protestant or civil marriage. By the Council of Trent's infallible Decrees, in 1564, all marriages not contracted in Catholic churches, and before three witnesses, are

* *Praxis Confessarii:* see *St. Alphonsus Liguori*, by R. P. Blakeney, p. 295.

† Archdeacon Sinclair's *Charges*, p. 424.

invalid; and we owe it solely, as an archbishop tells us, to "the mercy of the Church," and to the gracious condescension (which may be withdrawn at any moment) of His Holiness the Pope that the Decrees have not been put in force canonically in England. But for his paternal benevolence we Protestant married folk might all be living at this day (to borrow the elegant language of Pius IX) in a state of "filthy concubinage"! Indeed, there are many of us British citizens, in England and elsewhere to-day, married in church and according to the laws and social usages of our land, who now come under Rome's condemnation as mortal sinners, whoremongers, and Heaven knows what else. The question, therefore, is now by no means a merely academic one. By the Decree *Ne Temere* of 1907 Pius X revived the Trent Decrees and made them binding throughout the world, sweeping away, except in Germany and Hungary, all dispensations and exemptions. The Trent conditions for the validity of marriages were extended to the whole United Kingdom, and all contrary privileges abolished. The *Ne Temere* is not, it will therefore be seen, strictly speaking a new law, but a revival of a very old one.

Startling developments have followed in numerous cases. A Catholic and a Protestant are married in a Protestant Church. The State says the parties are man and wife, but Mother Church says, "No!" and puts her heavy foot down. "The ceremony you have gone through," she tells them, "is worthless." The contract is "null and void"; the marriage is "invalid."* "It is no marriage at all," says Catholic

* See Trent Decrees and *Ne Temere*, where the statements in both documents are perfectly general; the Church does not merely say that the marriage is void in Catholic eyes.

Truth over and over again. The parties are described as living in concubinage and sin, the wife as a harlot or concubine, and by the eighth chapter of the Council of Trent's Decrees the English lady who lives to-day with a "concubinary" husband is liable to be rigorously punished, according to the measure of her guilt, by the temporal or secular arm. The offspring of this concubinary alliance are stated in round terms to be illegitimate, and the Church is careful to bring these unpleasant facts home to us in various ways. In Ireland newly married couples are continually being denounced in unmeasured terms by the priests, at the instigation of their bishops, from the pulpit or the altar.* Sometimes, as in the notorious McCann case, the priest comes along and tells the man he is living in mortal sin and must leave his wife.† In dread of eternal damnation he obeys, in some cases, by deserting her and leaving his family in the direst penury. Here, once more, we find sacerdotalism arrogating to itself the right to override the civil law, placing itself in direct conflict with the State, and injuring the community by impeding marriage when our population sadly needs replenishing.

The offensive insolence of the Church knows no bounds. If a man publicly and grossly insults a good

* In July 1918 a couple were publicly denounced at Mass by the Bishop of Cork as living in "concubinage and sin," the wife being a Protestant; and the episcopal proclamation was subsequently published in the *Cork Examiner*.

† A few months ago the Vicar of Livesey, in Lancashire, married a Catholic man to a Protestant woman in his church. The Romanist Rector of a neighbouring parish called on the husband, told him that he was living in mortal sin, and must be remarried in a Catholic church, or else leave his wife. On being remonstrated with, the Rector said he was only doing his duty, and would do the same again.

woman in her honour—and in her tenderest spot, her child—we regard him in the light of what he shows himself to be, a blackguard and a cad; and it is not clear why an alien Church should be allowed any special privilege in the matter, and be shielded from libel actions or other operations of the law. The law would not permit me to get up on a platform and say that my Catholic neighbour's wife is living an evil life, and that her children are bastards, because she was not married in a church of the religion which I happen to profess. Why should the priests of an Italian Church be granted a licence which is denied to an Englishman born? Now, however, if a non-Catholic makes his protest against these and similar outrages, and is betrayed into using language which is strong, but of a less provocative nature than that of the Roman priests, he is liable, in parts of London at any rate, to be haled before a magistrate and fined or imprisoned.*

The Protestant husband, whether "concubinary" or otherwise, is subject to other forms of priestly insolence, meddling, and mischief-making, as we have already seen. It remains to deal with another nuisance, the Roman proselytizer. The creation of domestic dissension without adequate reason is a base and contemptible business, a terrible evil which should always be avoided if possible. The Latin Church is by no means the only offender in this respect, but the anti-Catholic proselytizer is in many respects on a different plane from his Romanist rival. The latter is warring for the enslavement of human beings, while the campaign of the other is directed to their spiritual

* Convictions have recently been obtained in London, under circumstances which caused grave dissatisfaction.

liberation ; and in most cases it is not the Protestant who is the aggressor. If one side uses poison gas the other is forced to follow suit ; and the methods employed by the Roman Church in its warfare against the world's peace are often very objectionable. The Protestant proselytizer does not deal in threats of eternal torment ; he addresses himself to the reason of the intended convert, his common sense and sense of decency. He does not pry around his victim's household, or worm out secrets from penitents and friends and relations and servants. He appeals, as a rule, to men's better nature, and to their intelligence ; he does not employ a subtle cajolery under the mask of austerity, the seductive arts of spiritual captation, " entice by the offer of Paradise, or frighten by the terrors of Hell." He abstains from fawning and wheedling, misrepresenting doctrine, flattering men and women and boys and girls on their *weakest* side, playing the courtier's part and undertaking to promote their spiritual and social interests ; he does not appeal to people's fears and fancies and frivolities ; dangle before them the prospect, as I think Mr. Bagot puts it in *The Casting of Nets*, of golden crowns in the next world and the society of people who wear coronets in this. To borrow the words of Newman in his unregenerate days, we do not see Protestant " agents smiling, and nodding, and ducking to attract attention, as gipsies make up to truant boys, holding out tales for the nursery, and pretty pictures, and gilt gingerbread, and physic concealed in jam, and sugar-plums for good children. . . . We Englishmen like manliness, openness, consistency, truth. Rome will never gain on us

till she learns these virtues, and uses them." * Nor, lastly, does the Protestant, so far as I am aware, follow the bad example set by his rivals in promising not to attempt conversion, and then frequently breaking the promise.

By this continual driving-in of the clerical wedge, this breaking up of family life and happiness, ecclesiastics are doing, not God's work as some falsely pretend, but devils' work; yet the priestly Ishmael goes on his way setting humanity by the ears, and making bad blood and estrangement every day and all over the world.

The Church, Catholics say, must proselytize to live. Her army is the army of the Lord, but desertions are distressingly frequent; her ranks need constant replenishing, and every good Catholic should regard himself as a potential recruiting sergeant to fill the gaps caused by seceders. All this may be true enough from the Church's point of view, but the victims of her machinations cannot be expected to regard the matter in the same light. To those who have suffered at her hands in mind and body, who know the shocking evil of a divided kindred and a disordered household, her efforts to cause dissension in the home are an attack on all they hold most dear, a constant offensive against their peace, which they are entitled to resist to the uttermost. There is all the difference in the world

* *Apologia*, p. 126. Newman subsequently retracted these charges, making the rather thin excuse that he was not speaking his own words, but only following what many Anglican divines had said. He ascribes his shocking language largely to his "impetuous temper" (that temper which so grieved the angelic disposition of his brother Cardinal, Manning), and to the hope that he would approve himself to persons he respected!! (*Apologia*, p. 201).

between the preaching of the gospel and the insinuating arts of the private proselytizer, whose conduct some Catholics strongly condemn. Of these Catholics Tyrrell was one: his recipe for converting England was to "educate our priests and make them sober and pure, and to leave Protestants alone until we are in a position to set them an example." A greater than Tyrrell, Christ, told His disciples to preach the gospel; but the evangelists record only one allusion (Matthew xxiii. 15) by the Saviour to proselytizing. His remarks on that occasion were not complimentary, or encouraging as to results.

CHAPTER IX

THE SECTARIAN EVIL

" Who can dwell with perpetual burnings ? "
" Oh, how diabolical it is to hate in God ! "
(Michelet).

IN the first chapter we discussed the fatal facility with which religious fervour descends into the pit of sectarian hatred, and the general tendency of Romanism to act as domestic, social, and political dissolvent was indicated. It remains to enumerate some of the special forms of mischief which this tendency sets up, beginning with those resulting from the Church's interference in the sphere of intellectual liberty. Rome professes outwardly an intense respect for human reason. " Reason is the throne of the Godhead," it says, but the reason we employ must be that which Rome approves : no other is genuine, and the Church will flay us alive rather than allow us to use any but her own particular brand. The selection of a religion is admittedly a matter of opinion—Newman and others say we must begin with private judgment—but our opinion must be the fanatic's opinion, and woe betide us if we select a creed that is not the one that he favours.

We accept the authority of the priests by an act of personal independent judgment. Our assent, in other words, is an intellectual assent ; we use our private

judgment, when we decide to abdicate our right to use it. Yet, if our fallible human intellect errs, Rome consigns us to Purgatorial pains or everlasting torment. "Man is free to obey his reason," said Leo XIII; but when Tyrrell, Loisy, Mivart, and others asserted their liberty to do so, and employed their reason to test the validity of their beliefs, they were promptly suppressed and excommunicated. The Church, shorn by an ungrateful world of the power to burn or torture them, deprived them of the Sacraments and, in Tyrrell's case, of what she regards as Christian burial. "He that believeth not shall be damned"; outside the one and only Church there is no salvation. "Every religion but one is the work of the devil, a snare, an imposture, a spurious imitation, a greater lie in that it embodies and perverts a greater measure of truth." * "Truth is one, absolute, exclusive. To worship any other god is not merely rebellion and desertion; it is folly, immorality, falsehood." If I am right (and of course I am right) all you others must be wrong; for truth is one. Intolerance thus eats down from a man's superficial acts and professions into the very core and fibre of his being. The fanatic disclaims any infallibility about human matters passing under his nose every day, but professes the utmost certainty concerning mysteries far beyond human ken. So certain is he, in his brainless arrogance, of the correctness of his convictions that if you express any doubts concerning these very debatable matters he will kill or maim you if he can. The Inquisitioner and the hangman must be called in to teach you sounder doctrine.

Let us see how these theories work out in practice

* *Christianity at the Cross-Roads*, p. 228.

whenever the men who profess them have the power to carry them into effect. Unlimited authority is almost invariably abused, and the case is worse when the people who wield it serve a religion of unreason. We must be content with a few examples, or this chapter would require indefinite extension; the Church's persecuting record would fill many large tomes. For a typical, and fairly modern, instance of Romish savagery let us take the case of poor old Jean Calas, a rich and respected French Huguenot, sixty-eight years of age, broken on the wheel in 1762—in the middle of the century which is called the Age of Reason—to gratify Catholic fanaticism and ferocity. The Calas case was a sort of eighteenth-century *affaire Dreyfus*, but with a more tragic ending. Though old and infirm, he was falsely accused by the Romanists of strangling his own son, whom he dearly loved, and was condemned to be broken on the wheel and burned. He died like the hero and martyr that he was. Hardly a groan escaped him in his dire agony, as the fanatic fiends racked his bones and flesh, gratifying thereby their filthy love of cruelty in the name of Jesus, and teaching the world what unspeakable crimes sectarianism in general, and Rome in particular, is capable of committing. His widow, penniless and starving, begged her way to Paris and appealed for justice. The pious faithful said it was "better to let an old Calvinist be broken on the wheel, even if he were innocent, than oblige eight councillors of Languedoc to admit that they had been mistaken"; but Madame Calas, like Dreyfus a hundred and forty years later, found eloquent and powerful champions. Voltaire gave voice to the horror inspired in all good men by this vile deed and by the human

brutes who perpetrated it. "Écrasez l'infâme!" he cried, but the Infamous was not crushed; it still remains erect and unabashed, ready to repeat the infamies of the past should opportunity occur. "In the end the judges of the Paris Court unanimously declared the family innocent, rehabilitated the father's memory, condemned the Toulouse jurisdiction, and issued a faculty to the family to sue it for damages." * The poor widow could not bring her dead husband back to life, but at least she vindicated his name.

Similar atrocities followed. Here a man hanged, there five youths condemned to the flames for pardonable extravagances: the world, seeing "the kingdom of God transformed into the image of Hell," grew ashamed and furious, but Rome pursued the even tenor of its way. At the close of the nineteenth century the old spirit of religious rancour and barbarity found fresh opportunity for its expression. A Jewish captain of artillery, Dreyfus by name, offered a convenient target for the persecuting spirit of the Church, and she was not slow in making the most of her chance. Militarism and Romanism united their kindred forces in order to destroy this "misbegotten Hebrew," an innocent member of an unpopular sect; but public indignation against the mixed crew of clerical and martial scoundrels proved irrepressible, and this time justice won the day. "Men of heart and head stepped forward out of all ranks, out of all corporations, the Church excepted. The Church alone on this occasion furnished no champion of right, of innocence, of truth, so hatefully outraged." Enlightened people called on

* See *Roman Catholicism as a Factor in European Politics*, by F. C. Conybeare, p. 74.

the so-called defenders of eternal law, the mouthpieces of the Holy Spirit in moral issues, to lend a hand in the work of mercy and justice. A leading Parisian vicar answered that the clergy had no business to take sides: he apparently forgot that they were at that time fighting might and main and, as usual, on the side of reaction and wrong. "Leave the priest alone," said another; "he is above all that. His mission is a higher one." * And the submissive faithful cheerfully accept this sort of apology: they forget, or pretend to forget, that they have social responsibilities as well as religious ones, and are quite content to leave their minds and souls in the keeping of men who do things that make decent folk sick with shame and disgust.

The worst enemies of religion have ever been the people who think themselves the most religious. The Church's best friends, if she only knew it, are the critics and *illuminati* who, though they are the objects of her most pertinacious hatred, kindly supply her with the few ideas worth having which she possesses. The stray beams of light which relieve her darkness come from outside her fold. But for the heretics she afflicts and destroys, whenever she gets the chance, the Church would have been overwhelmed long ago under the world's contempt. And the heretic not only supplies the Church with brains and knowledge, which she regards as very unpalatable medicine; he is slowly but surely putting a very necessary curb on her ferocity. Many of the biggest criminals in history, such as the German Kaiser and the directors of the Inquisition,

* See *Roman Catholicism as a Factor in European Politics*, by F. C. Conybeare, p. 7.

have been, and are still, men who "hate in God"; but their mental *rabies* will shortly, we may hope, be receiving the attention of competent practitioners armed with the muzzle and other efficient safeguards—with, perhaps, a lethal chamber in reserve for special emergencies. Is it not time that these loathsome beliefs in "gods in whose name men kill" and burn and torture—all to gratify a malignant divinity of their own creation, who is supposed to take pleasure in butcheries—were relegated to the dust-heap on which other outworn and detestable superstitions lie? The savage temper of the Roman Church, no less than her obscurantist absolutism, must be broken or put under restraint. The spirit of intolerance and persecution is far from being dead or dying, as so many people wrongly suppose; it still breaks out spasmodically, in action or in print, at the most unexpected times and in the most unlikely quarters. "Kill all," said Pius V to the soldiers he sent into France for the massacres of the Huguenots—compared with which the massacres of the French Revolution were but trifling; and the homicidal tendencies displayed the other day by his namesake, Pius X (see p. 67), surprised, no less than they shocked, the admirers of that amiable Pontiff. The hyena is naturally a bloodthirsty animal, and the journalistic "hyenas" of the Romish Press break out at intervals in praise of the Spanish Inquisition and in hopes for its restoration. A book by the Jesuit Father Marianus de Luca (1901) vindicated the rights of the Church to kill and flog heretics and apostates. The author was a professor of the Papal University at Rome; "his work is issued from the Vatican Press; it is accompanied by a strong letter of approval from

the 'liberal' Pope, Leo XIII." * When things seem to be going well for them, the Catholics on the Irish newspaper staffs begin to talk of persecution and the suppression of heretic places of worship. Following the example of their brethren in France and Italy they hymn the glories of the Inquisition.

The Catholic saint, with his unnatural life, his strange blending of "rapturous love towards Jesus and serpentine cunning," his artificial saintliness, added frequently to a cold-blooded and highly incongruous ferocity—the worst persecutors were members of religious Orders—is a product of sectarianism, which can turn a good and noble man, or a man who is stated by his biographers to be good and noble (biographers are not always to be trusted in these matters), into a brutal tyrant. That pattern of Catholic holiness, St. Francis Xavier, uttered sweet words of comfort to the Portuguese victims of the Inquisition; he cheerfully encouraged them on their awful journey to the other world, but he showed no symptom of pity. Later on he did his best to get the Inquisition set up in India. It was quite a natural thing for a Churchman to do, and men of his kind would do the same thing in England to-day at the first opportunity. To take a recent instance, Catholic Poland, having been granted her freedom by Europe, promptly uses it to persecute the Jews abominably. A tiger is less cruel than a cleric on the warpath. The great St. Augustine advocated the employment of force in religious controversy. He is a recognized authority for persecution; and his horrible doctrine of predestination, which tells us that a large part of humanity is condemned to eternal

* *The Popes and their Church*, by J. McCabe, p. 211.

torment under an antecedent Divine decree, is a natural fruit of the particularist spirit in religion. "Many are called, but few are chosen," and Mother Church makes a singularly bad selection. When Voltaire from the inmost depths of his soul cried, "Écrasez l'infâme!" he was not merely crying out against specific misdeeds of the Roman Church; he was indicting the evils of sectarianism.

The absurd assumption of narrow-minded persons that they are infallible, self-sufficing, and worthy of possessing absolute rule over their fellow-creatures, is also responsible for many of the minor mischiefs with which we are contending to-day. We have seen how Rome seeks by its decrees to thrust its conceptions of the marriage vow down the throats of people outside its communion, but the authority it seeks to impose upon us is other than purely juridical. The mixed marriage is not expressly forbidden by the Church, but it is frowned upon by all good Catholics and also by many Protestants. If a Catholic and a Protestant fall in love, and desire to follow their natural instincts, and get married, sectarianism tells them that such a union is a "menace" to true religion, and discourages it in every possible way. If the pair persist, and the ceremony is performed in a Protestant place of worship, Mother Church abuses them heartily and insults the woman vilely by calling her and her offspring very bad names. In the *Tablet* and elsewhere I have lately been reading some pathetic letters from Catholic men complaining of the difficulty they experience in finding suitable brides of their own faith. There are Protestant maidens galore waiting for husbands, but if the "lonely officer" casts an eye on one of these, Faith

steps in and, except under stringent conditions, forbids the banns.

The harm done to mental development and character by the sectarian spirit has been pointed out already. In order to accommodate their religious prejudices parents send their children to inferior places of education, thus handicapping their chances in life. The ridiculous multiplication of schools, to provide for the various sects, is the bane of sound education in Ireland and, to a lesser degree, in Canada. The Toronto University, for example, is absolutely secular ; but Mr. Siegfried * says that " it is surrounded by a network of affiliated colleges belonging to the different sects." This state of things does not conduce to a sound educational system. Money is wasted, efficiency rendered impossible : there is no co-ordination. The schools are small and badly built, and worse equipped. The priest or pastor has full control, and the children play truant : when they do attend they are taught particularism and religious intolerance. There is a plethora of underpaid and incompetent teachers ; and education, having no eye to the real needs of the pupils, goes to the wall. In village life the members of the various denominations are taught to keep apart, and to look askance on one another, because of their religious beliefs. Secular occupations are supervised by the clergy : the parish pump has got to be worked with an eye to theology, rather than to the drawing of water for thirsty men or cows. Wherever possible sectarian hatred expresses itself in active persecution. In Ireland there are occasions when the priest eggs on his parishioners to methods of barbarism. As minister

* *The Race Question in Canada*, p. 98.

of a cruel Church he practises cruelty. He denounces some unfortunate man or woman and organizes a boycott against them, with all that a boycott entails. In one case the sufferer broke down under the persecution led by the parish priest. "He never recovered, and he died declaring that the priest had caused his death. The wife had also suffered, and her turn came soon. On her death-bed she was asked, 'Shall we send for the priest?' and replied, 'I believe God will forgive me for preferring to die without the help of the man that killed my husband.'"

"Only Catholics," says "Pat," himself a Catholic, "know fully what this means, and yet they permit these horrible uses to be made of their religion." * The sectarian evil must be fought, and with every legitimate weapon at our disposal. The chief instrument of its destruction must always be education—full, free, and as far as possible undenominational. Education is the business of the State, religion of the Church. Let each mind its own business, and leave the other in peace. In this way tranquillity will be gradually restored, and artificially created antagonisms die a natural death. Why should the flame of strife be for ever kept alight by religious bigotry squabbling over contradictory and often mutually destructive dogmas, and serving its own wicked and selfish ends? Why is it that, in Ireland exactly the same as in Canada, we see two communities bound to each other by every tie of interest, common sense, trade, economic system, and geographical position, sundered by miserable squabbles to their own mutual hurt? In Quebec there is a racial gulf, but it could be easily bridged with a little mutual

* *The Sorrows of Ireland*, p. 76.

forbearance and goodwill: there is no necessity whatever for Canadian Catholics and Protestants—fellow-citizens of no mean city, breathing a common air and owing a common allegiance—to live apart and herded, as it were, in separate cages, like two hostile communities. In Ireland the racial elements are almost precisely similar, if with different admixtures, to those in Great Britain—it is absurd for mixed Celtic, Danish, and Teutonic peoples to quarrel over their origins; yet we see Ulsterman and Hibernian, who ought to be working together for their own and their country's good, continually by the ears. Men fight, says Carlyle, "not against the general enemy, evil, but amongst themselves"; and the cynic exclaims, "Behold, how these Christians love one another!" It was the opinion of an ancient Irish sage that "there ought to be no contention concerning the gods" *; and he showed himself a wiser man than our irreconcilable sectarians of to-day with their everlasting discords. Other influences, no doubt, besides religion are at work; but it is the creed-instinct that is the real root of these detestable rancours.

"Tantum religio potuit suadere malorum!"

Happily the political clericalism which artificially creates and maintains these antipathies is not really religion at all, but a hideous travesty of religion: indeed, able Catholic practitioners prescribe religion as the only real cure for clericalism. The world, however, may take comfort from the reflection that the ability of ecclesiastics to work all this mischief is surely

* So Euripides, *Bacchæ*, 200:—Οὐδὲν σοφιζώμεσθα τοῖσι δαίμοσι. (We never wrangle [or rationalize] concerning the gods.)

weakening. The day that has dawned full of promise, as we trust, for the future of mankind, is the twilight of mediævalism: the dream of sectarian absolutism faded away when the Allies chased the Hun from the ravaged fields of France.

CHAPTER X

THE ROOT OF THE MISCHIEF

> "When men are trusted without limit, when they profess to draw their knowledge from esoteric sources, when their inaccuracies cannot be checked or their information verified, when, in short, they are placed in primitive conditions, their primitive nature comes out, and the whole weight of their authority is lent to the obstruction of truth and the multiplication of error" (*Christianity at the Cross-Roads*, p. 244).

A CATHOLIC friend of mine, writing to me in extenuation of the Irish priests' disloyalty—a disloyalty which is as repugnant to the writer of the letter as it is to most of us—pointed out very truly that they were only ignorant peasants in a slightly advanced stage. I could only reply that this is just what we complain of. The Church has invested these very inferior men—I use the word "inferior" with a special reference to their pretensions and the enormous influence they possess—with godlike powers which the wisest and best of men would be unfitted to exercise. It is here, I think, that we strike the main root of the evil which the Church of Rome works in the world. "Condense all power," says Tyrrell, "into the hands of one man, who may be a fool or a knave, and what can you expect?" These words were written of the Pope, but they apply with perhaps greater force to the ordinary village priest. "Think of one man, a mere man, sometimes a drunkard, commonly a gossip, bound by his calling to know the

innermost secrets, good and bad, of virtue and of vice, in every man and woman in his parish! It is a terrible power, and I select the adjective in its most reverent sense. The man really fit to fill the office of a Catholic priest is the nearest thing to God on earth. Can a man properly discharge these responsibilities and be a party leader in the quarrels and conflicts of his parish?"

So speaks the enlightened Catholic, "Pat," in *The Sorrows of Ireland.* Origen was of the opinion that "the priest must be a little god": in Ireland he is a very great god, though his intellectual and other qualities are not always exactly godlike. Rome affords the curious spectacle, first, of a large body of clerics, possessing neither the training nor the mental or moral endowments which alone could qualify them for their gigantic responsibilities, wielding an authority such as a Solomon or a Socrates might well hesitate to assume; and, secondly, of a submissive laity cheerfully accepting the unchecked sway of personal authority, in the vague belief that it is based upon divine ordinances.

Many important consequences flow from this individual monopoly of, and dominion over, the human mind and will. The extravagant claims of the Roman hierarchy to supernatural attributes are gradually, but inevitably, extended to the whole of the clergy. The priests are clothed by the Church with tremendous privileges and faculties, and make of them a secular instrument for dominating mankind in their souls, bodies—and purses. In Ireland, as we have seen, the layman must be supervised by the priest in all sorts of matters that are not even remotely connected with religion. It will be said—it is said—by Catholics that

the priest has exceeded his privileges, and that the Church is not to blame for the resulting abuses. I reply that she is entirely to blame, that the secularization of religion, and the religious degradation which inevitably follows, is a natural result of the system which Rome has set up. Without proper safeguards unlimited authority is invariably abused. Give an ordinary, commonplace man the opportunity of "bossing" in one part of the field of human life, and he will surely endeavour to boss over the whole. The Church, by investing the priest with the attributes of a medicine-man or a wizard, gives him that opportunity; and so we see the ecclesiastic everywhere exploiting the altar and its mysteries for his own ends, trafficking in religion and making a very good thing out of it. As Omar Khayyám justly remarks in his *Rubáiyát*:

"Oh, the sorry trade!"

The clerics also keep the keys of knowledge, and open therewith the secret chambers of the heart to their own advantage. "We know all about it," they say; "you know nothing, so listen to us." The statesman, the commercial expert, the scientist, must all bow the knee to the youthful wonder-workers fresh from the seminaries. Scientific and historical truth is to be subordinated to scholastic "theology posing as revelation," and the Church's assent must be given to every human act and opinion. So we arrive at the moral root of the evil embedded in the Roman system, which is indicated in the quotation forming the heading to this chapter. When priests are given such wide authority, and it is accepted submissively by their flocks; when they are trusted without limit, and their

very word is law, arrogance and unscrupulosity and unveracity are sure to follow. "Few men can stand the corrupting influence of unlimited trust. Credulity in the listeners breeds untruthfulness in the speaker." The habit of gratuitous assertion, of saying, not what we know to be untrue, but what we do not know to be true, is a demoralizing practice which is easily acquired. "Nine-tenths of our untruthfulness is of this sort; and it is fostered by the credulity or the indifference of our hearers." *

The closing sentence is important. The Roman Church could not exist but for the credulity and abject subserviency displayed by the bulk of its adherents, and their reluctance to look unwelcome facts in the face. The bishop or priest, standing, as we are told, outside and above his flock, as a being of another and higher species, is the shepherd of the people. Like every good shepherd he expects his flock to behave like sheep; and, to do them full justice, they seldom disappoint him. The Catholic laity, therefore, are not blameless in this matter: *populus vult decipi, decipiatur*; they asked for humbug, and they have got it —in full measure and running over. Most Catholic sermons—and I have heard a good many in my time—seem to betray a profound conviction on the preacher's part that his audience are mostly gulls. It may be that the wish is father to the thought. The Englishman, in the Catholic's opinion, "thinks too much of truth": he also has a pig-headed tendency towards finding the truth out for himself, and using his own brains in the process. That is why he is not, as a rule, a Roman Catholic. Unverified, and unverifiable, asser-

* *Christianity at the Cross-Roads*, p. 243.

tion by the teaching part of the Church, added to gullibility in the learning part, have placed Catholics and Catholicism in a thoroughly false position. The Church has for the last seventy years been continually enlarging its pretensions, and encroaching on the preserves of the State and the family. To bolster up this newly formed authority all sorts of artifices have to be resorted to. New dogmatic defences must be erected; the authority of Divine revelation is given to a number of assertions which every educated person nowadays knows to be untrue.

It was fiction, according to Tyrrell, that saved apostolic Christianity from being transformed out of all recognition; and "the necessary fictions" of the Church are for ever increasing in volume and audacity. She pretends that what she calls religious truth is sure and verifiable, like the laws and functions of the material universe, and therefore sovereign: if Catholic Truth and scientific truth clash, so much the worse for the latter; it must go under. In this way Rome has built the foundations of its Church on the quicksands of ignorance, and based the authority of its ministers on the surrender to them by their flocks of mind and will, and the abnegation of private judgment. Personal authority of this kind, derived from extraneous sources, and unaccompanied by any outstanding qualities in its possessor, acquires an influence out of all proportion to its intrinsic worth; and it is also, as is only too evident, very demoralizing to the men who exercise it. "Repression is met by stealthy evasion, distrust and duplicity in the rulers evoke the same qualities in the subjects." Those "swarming legions of lies," that "all-permeating mendacity," which so justly angered

Father Tyrrell, are almost wholly due to Rome's frantic efforts to buttress its spiritual and temporal power by every conceivable means; and the ramifications of this spirit of unveracity spread through every branch of the ecclesiastical organization. "The axe must go to the root of the tree—to this radical lie that has branched into a whole system of lies, each needed for the support of the rest." * The lie of the Papacy is less the spoken lie than the lie of the soul; it is a moral canker in the body of truth, a system which holds that edification can be achieved through tampering with the truth from religious motives. "Will ye speak wickedly for God, and talk deceitfully for Him?" "Doth God need your lie?" queried the Hebrew seer: "Yes, He does need it," the champions of a dogmatic creed in effect reply. Even liberal Protestants think that there may be a danger in surrendering absurd theological opinions, which they consider to be an aid to virtue. Roman theologians tell us, and the Curia confirms their doctrine, that a "just cause," such as the good of the Church, is a complete justification of falsity. With more wisdom Huxley affirms that the foundation of morality is to have done, once and for all, with lying.

The mischief wrought in the sphere of secular affairs by Roman absolutism has been dealt with in the preceding chapter; its fruits are visible in the condition of all countries where the Church holds sway. We have an object-lesson in Ireland at our very doors; and other parts of our Empire suffer grievously from the paralysing influence of a Church which is for ever trespassing on ground which is not

* *Mediævalism*, p. 175.

hers. Mr. Ryan has explained to us, in *The Pope's Green Island*, the theological significance of waterworks-managing on the other side of the St. George's Channel, and we know that in various countries the Church insists upon a religious basis for the practice of medicine, the curing of bacon, and other matters of a temporal nature. To avoid accusations of "hoisting the black banner of irreligion," and the very unpleasant consequences that follow such charges in Catholic countries, you will be wise not to do your ploughing or store-keeping in heterodox fashion, but to regard the Church which claims superhuman wisdom as a safe guide in every conceivable matter. The priest in this way shoulders responsibilities far beyond, not merely his right, but his capacities; he rules an earthly kingdom as well as the kingdom of God. When the priest, as "Pat" says, "expands his exclusive judgment on religion into his exclusive judgment on everything else, lays down the law on all things for patrician and plebeian together, dictates his policy to the statesman, his fees to the doctor, his voting to the citizen, their opinions to the public, and so turns his sacred privilege into a secular weapon; then, the highest things we know are dragged in the dirt, and character, economic and otherwise, is sunk under a confusion of standards that tend to make the individual a machine rather than a man, with heaven itself pressed into the process of human demoralization." *

The wise Æ tells us that he is of the number of those who believe that the natural level of the spirit is with the highest in the universe, and he regards as "damnable heresies" all other conceptions of man's

* *Economics for Irishmen*, p. 145.

destiny; yet he has no word of reprobation for the Church which encourages this heresy. "No country," he says, "can ever hope to rise beyond vulgar mediocrity where there is not unbounded confidence in what its humanity can do." The modern world has no use for a clerical system that sets limits to human enterprise, that would rob life of its essential nobility, and, failing to see that self-help is better than priest's help, is content with a mean scheme of earthly existence where men stagnate and rot. So long as human minds and religious instincts continue under the rigid rule of personal authority, overriding conscience, and vested, perhaps, in thoroughly inferior or unqualified men—so long as a large section of mankind takes without question its principles of righteousness from external rather than internal sources, from officials with insufficient credentials for the supremacy they claim—trouble, confusion, and demoralization will surely prevail.

CHAPTER XI

THE CONFESSIONAL

"*Memini mei, quia te ex corde diligo*" (Remember me, because I love thee from the heart: the confessor to the fair penitent; see St. Alphonsus Liguori's *Moral Theology*).

"If I had daughters, and if I let them go to confession at all—which is doubtful—I should make them go to a drunken priest, that there might be no nonsense of this kind" (Father Tyrrell).

THE confessional may, I think, be described without exaggeration as the keystone of Rome's ecclesiastical edifice. Through it the priests obtain that complete mastery over the human soul on which their power, spiritual and temporal, is based. Above all, they gain *knowledge* of various kinds which they use to the uttermost. In public affairs, it has been well said, Romanism possesses the most perfect secret service in the world; it has the opportunity, by means of the confessional, of worming out secrets from its adherents; it taps a man's innermost thoughts, and so gets valuable information with a facility that no other organization enjoys. In private life it secures a domination which is subtle, far-reaching, and complete. In this way the Roman Church becomes a species of secret society, forming associations, plotting, burrowing, and undermining in all directions. Intrigue is its principle occupation, and its field is the field of human weakness and passion. Père Coton's influence over Henry IV of France, who turned Catholic for political reasons—his

saying was, "Paris is well worth a mass"—shows what a clever confessor can do. The amorous monarch "paid for his human weaknesses with political ones; such an amour cost him a State secret, such a bastard a royal ordinance." * Father Coton paid the king liberally in the coin of absolution, and the consideration he received in return was the education of the Dauphin.

The dangers attending the theories and practice of the Roman confessional have been the theme of much writing by men of various creeds, and during many centuries, but few people appear to have more than a vague apprehension of the mischief which the system actually occasions. First of all, let me say a word as to the disgusting nature of the instructions given to priests for administering interrogatories in the confessional, and the perniciously wide discretion given them as to asking objectionable questions. The handbooks warn confessors against unnecessary interrogation of wives and girls on various horrible subjects, but say they are *bound* so to interrogate them if they think there is sufficient cause. In order to qualify her ministers for these revolting duties the Church compels them to become, at any rate, theoretical experts in all sorts of unmentionable matters, and then lets them loose on our wives and families. The confessor not only is to interrogate them on their actions, but also on the evil thoughts † which they may have harboured; he may, if he thinks there is sufficient cause, put indecent questions on obscene subjects to young persons

* *Le Prêtre, la Femme, et la Famille*, p. 5.

† *Malæ cogitationes*; see Liguori's *Praxis Confessarii*, and Blakeney's *St. Alphonsus Liguori*, p. 293.

whose minds are entirely innocent, and properly innocent, of such things (*pueris et puellis hujusmodi fœditatum prorsus ignaris, et utiliter ignaris*).*

It is not pleasant to think of one's wife or daughter being questioned by a young priest on the lines indicated by the directions for administering interrogatories in the confessional, which may be found in Liguori's *Theologia Moralis, Praxis Confessarii,* and in the various handbooks now in general use. Many of the matters dealt with therein are such as would hardly occur to the most hardened modern sinner, much less to decent men, women, and girls. Liguori says that the priest "stirs up the filthy mire for the purpose of curing the disease." It does not seem to occur to him that by stirring up the mire he may also be stirring up the disease, suggesting, and thereby causing to exist, evil which before was non-existent. "Oh, that this subject were not so frequent as it is in confessions!" he exclaims,† but he does nothing to discourage the practice of prurient questioning.

The best Roman priests detest, as any decent person must detest, the hateful duties forced on them as confessors, but they dare not shirk them. A worthy parish priest, a friend of Michelet's, often told the historian that the sore part of his profession, that which filled him with despair, and his life with torment, was the confession.‡ Catholics of high standing, including such men as St. Thomas Aquinas and San Carlo Borromeo, revolted at the idea of confessors having to utter interrogatories which instructed their

* St. Alphonsus Liguori; see Archdeacon Sinclair's *Charges*, p. 418.

† *Moral Theology*, vi, 900.

‡ *Priests, Women, and Families*, translation by C. Cocks, p. 165.

penitents in evil things: indeed, the whole thing is loathsome, repugnant to decency and common sense. Questions were put to the Holy Inquisition on this matter by priests anxious to be relieved of these irksome responsibilities. A proposition was stated to the effect that "it is never expedient to question wives and husbands" on various intimate matrimonial subjects. The reply of the Inquisition was that the proposition, in the form in which it was stated, was "false, too lax, and dangerous in practice." * In other words, "modesty in the confessional is a sin"; and we have it on the unquestioned authority of St. A. Liguori † that these unpleasant subjects are a very "frequent and abundant material of confessions."

Mr. Joseph McCabe, in his interesting work, *The Popes and their Church* (p. 178), describes how revolting the whole business was to him personally while he was a priest; and he also corroborates what the theologians say as to the necessity of asking beastly questions in the confessional. He tells us of "the consecrated pruriency of the business"; and how the nuns and lady teachers who prepare the penitents for the confessional impress upon them that they *must* speak in detail. The priest must not let them off with general statements: he must ask questions, sometimes very grave ones, or he would sin himself.

A terrible responsibility is thus forced on confessors. Duties are thrust on them which no man ought to be asked to perform; they are placed in equivocal positions in which nobody ought ever to be placed—least of all young, half-educated men of the class from

* *Compendium Theologiæ Moralis*, by Father Gury, ii, 404.
† *Moral Theology*, iii, 413.

which the average priest is drawn. The temptations, the physical and mental distresses, to which priests are subjected while hearing confessions are indicated by St. Liguori with appalling frankness in some remarkable, but quite unprintable, passages of his voluminous works; and we get astonishing accounts from other sources which confirm the saint's unsavoury descriptions of what sometimes passes in the confessional. The moral theologians have drawn, roughly and clumsily after their wont, a deplorable picture of the unfortunate confessor's moral and material discomforts: Michelet, the artist-historian, has filled in the canvas with a master hand. He shows us the struggle of the flesh with the spirit that may take place, and penetrates the man's very soul. "The woman, whilst she was dragged at his feet as a frightened yet caressing suppliant, did not fail to notice, through her tears, the emotion she excited." They were both in emotion together; they both know by different emotions—she by desire, he by fear—that they have a hold upon each other; and the man who is empowered to "entice by the offer of Paradise, or frighten with the terrors of Hell," occupies a very commanding position.* It must be remembered, also, that the psychology of the modern man or woman renders the confessor's task far more difficult in these days than it used to be. A few simple questions sufficed when human nature was in a more primitive stage; nowadays the priest, primed with the villainous teaching of the seminaries, and using it to get at the back of the penitent's soul, must sift and cross-examine, if he would carry out the Church's instructions—probe the secret

* *Priests, Women, and Families*, p. 220.

places of the mind, and dive into the sinner's inmost thoughts.

The consequences which result from this absurd and essentially immoral system are only such as might be expected. Reading Michelet's terrible chapters one might be inclined to think he was exaggerating, but ample corroboration is to be found in the works, not only of the early Fathers, but in those of modern theologians and other writers. Indeed, the whole system of the confessional would seem to be expressly designed to create the conditions which cleric and freethinker unite in deploring. There are hundreds of priests, no doubt, who can safely be trusted not to abuse their prerogatives; but no human being, however good—certainly not the very inferior specimens turned out in thousands by the seminaries—ought to be placed in such highly risky situations. Liguori has an appendix of considerable length concerning the immorality which takes place in the confessional, and the frequency of the confessor's falls is indicated by such exclamations as the following: "Oh, how many confessors have lost their own souls and those of their penitents, on account of negligence in these matters!" He also says that it is misery to observe so many confessors spending a large portion of the day hearing the confessions of troublesome, fussy religious women; and tells us that, owing to the frailty of human nature, solicitation of women to immoral acts by confessors is by no means uncommon (*ob fragilitatem naturæ frequentius hæc sollicitatio*: *Moral Theology*, vi, 684).

To readers asking what truth there is in the stories of priests abusing the confessional in our later days,

Mr. McCabe,* who knows very well what he is talking about, replies, "There is much truth"; and he proceeds to give instances. I will content myself with asking my readers the simple question, "How could it possibly be otherwise?" If confirmation of this view were needed we should only have to go to the elaborate precautions and rules for the guidance of priests and confessors laid down by the moral theologians. In his *Praxis Confessarii*, Liguori, following the advice given by many of his predecessors, says that the confessor ought not to hear the confessions of women before dawn or after twilight. He must not make eyes at the ladies or allow them to kiss his hand—as the Russian ladies used to kiss Rasputin's unclean hands and arms. He must not go to women's homes except in cases of great sickness. (A very necessary precaution. Assignations between amorous confessors and their penitents are sometimes made under cover of feigned illness—see *The Popes and their Church*, pp. 180, 228. The Third and Fourth Lateran Councils descanted on clerical immorality, with especial reference to priests receiving women in their houses, or visiting them too frequently.) He should abstain from receiving gifts, and all other things which may be the cause of attachment (*qadhæsionis*). The number and frequency of these warnings and precautions show how very real is the danger, and the saint concludes his admonitions with the exclamation, "Oh, how many priests, who before were innocent, have, on account of similar attractions, which began in the spirit, lost both God and their souls."

The dangers of these attractions have been suggested in my chapter on "The Priest and the Family," and the

* *The Popes and their Church*, p. 179.

Fathers of the Church were well aware of them, " especially if the penitents be spiritual persons, with whom there is a greater danger of attraction." St. Augustine, a very wise man, was keenly alive to the perils of the confessional. He knew how easy is the transition from spiritual to carnal affection (*spiritualis devotio convertitur in carnalem*); how rapidly " depraved devotion " may drop from the dizzy heights of spiritual exaltation into the gulfs of sensuality. St. Alphonsus Liguori, amid much other quaint and interesting matter, quotes the Venerable Sartorius Capotus to the effect that the Devil, in order to unite spiritual persons together, makes use of the pretext of virtue so that the passion may pass thence from the virtue to the person; he uses spiritual attractions as a stepping-stone to carnal affection. That apostle of purity, St. Aloysius Gonzaga, kept constant watch and ward against these wiles of the Evil One, and he so dreaded the temptations of the flesh that he was afraid to look his own mother in the face: what safeguards he would have adopted while confessing ladies we know not, as he died quite young. St. Cuthbert, after spiritual conversation with a female saint, always took the wise precaution of standing through the long night hours in prayer, and up to his neck in cold water.

In chapter viii allusion was made to the atrocious education concerning sexual matters given to young priests in the seminaries. The foul literature misnamed " moral theology " was condemned, and it was pointed out that all this horrible stuff was written with the sole object of instructing young priests as to the interrogations they are to administer in the confessional

about very intimate matters. It has not, it cannot have, any other conceivable purpose. It is unnecessary to enlarge farther on the well-known evils of this miserable system as it affects the penitents, but the mischief to the students' minds is not generally recognised as it deserves to be. Only people who have read those abominable works of the moral theologians can form any idea of the nature of the studies which young priests go through in the seminaries. W. G. Ward, speaking of the philosophical training, told us that "No one who has not been mixed up practically in a seminary would imagine to how great an extent it intellectually debauches the students' minds." * Having wasted very many hours, which might have been much better spent, over these miserable books, I can add my testimony as to their pernicious nature. Michelet tells us that the studies, preparatory to confession, in this "idiotic education are such as entirely ruin the disposition, weaken the body, and enervate and defile the soul"; and he further asserts that the copybooks used by students in the last two years of seminary education are much worse than the printed books: "They contain things that the most audacious have never dared to publish." I do not gather, however, that Michelet had ever read Liguori; for nothing could be worse than the writings of this theologian, whose doctrines are officially approved and accepted by the Church to-day.

Only think of all this abominable teaching, or even part of it, suggesting interrogatories concerning the filthy vices of a debased and brutal age, being poured into the receptive minds of young priests and novices,

* Quoted in *Studies in Modernism*, p. 40.

and let out afterwards, at the not over-great discretion of the confessor, on his unfortunate penitents! Gury and the later handbook writers, whose works are based on Liguori, are certainly not quite so bad as their master; but they are bad enough. Against this wretched instruction, miscalled education, the finest minds in the Church have protested in vain. It is supposed to endow the priests, not only with knowledge which will be useful to them in their calling, but also, in some mysterious fashion, with virtues of a superhuman order. It does nothing of the sort. The young men's minds are fixed, by the study of their vile manuals, on things which are to be for ever denied them; their education, as Michelet says, gives them as subjects for study terrible temptations, such as would make all the saints run the risk of damnation. The Roman Church is obsessed with the notion that the human body and the human spirit can be kept separate, as though in watertight compartments. Nothing could be more fallacious. What is the use of sheltering the soul, in Jesuit fashion, with artificial defences and safeguards, as though it were a thing incapable of taking care of itself, if at the same time you deliberately instil poison into it? The "protective" defences are apt to break down when the man is brought in contact with the outer world; the habit of seeing sin, where no sin is, breeds prurience rather than purity; and the results, as we know, are often disastrous.

Volumes might be written on this most unpleasant topic, but I will forbear. Suffice it to say that the practice of the confessional, and of the training which leads up to it, is fundamentally rotten. Human nature,

no doubt, supplies in many cases its own antiseptic; the system probably does less harm, in England at any rate, than some people imagine. Mr. McCabe is very likely right when he says that, while helping some people, it rather debases others; " its essential evil is its almost incredible stupidity "—a remark which is not without a certain application to the Latin Church, its doctrines and practice, taken as a whole.

CHAPTER XII

SHUTTING OUT THE LIGHT

"And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good" (Genesis i. 3, 4).

IN the Church's golden Middle Age, when a submissive population contentedly wore the chains on mind and spirit imposed by the benevolence of an all-powerful theocracy, when the Catholic voice was supreme in the land, and infidelity daring to show its head promptly lost it, Faith was paramount and all went well—from the ecclesiastical point of view—with a strangely disordered and uninstructed world. The Church in those days was abreast of the time, in harmony for the most part with its views and tendencies, and the main source of such enlightenment as it possessed. The priest had a fair claim to dominate mind and conscience by virtue of a superior culture, to which the Church added an alleged endowment of supernatural powers and privileges. Since then the world has moved on, while Rome, making no effort to keep step with it, but rather opposing its progress, has been left standing alone in a position of isolation. The layman now knows a great deal more than the priest, and is growing restive under the latter's efforts to impose upon him an authority which is beginning to be questioned. What is the poor priest to do in order to maintain and reinforce his waning prestige? Given a fair field and no favour, he cannot compete with the layman, who

has had a much better general education, and his pretensions to supernatural enlightenment are now being subjected to severe scrutiny. The simplest plans are usually the best; and the simplest plan in the present case is to prevent the layman from knowing as much as he now knows, to rob him of the good education which he has come to consider as his birthright, but which is in these days being used to undermine spiritual authority. This is the plan which the Church has adopted.

Evadne in *The Heavenly Twins* "wanted to know," and the number of Evadnes in both sexes is constantly growing. The Church, on the other hand, wants not to know, and flaunts in our faces her contempt for what we call knowledge; she takes no interest in the discussion of religious problems which in her opinion were finally settled many hundreds of years ago, and she does her utmost to prevent other people from knowing more than she thinks is good for them—which is precious little. The Ultramontane ideal is to reduce the laity, and all individual life and thought in it, to what Tyrrell calls "a summation of zeros," a collection of individual ciphers bereft of personal volition or original thought, under the supreme direction of the Curia. Illiteracy is a clerical asset: the Roman seminaries specialize in ignorance of most things worth knowing, and the result is the increasing mental sterility of a Church which expels, one after another, her finest minds, her boldest and most inquiring spirits. The "Asiatic" system of the seminary is never good at its best; at its worst it is probably about as bad as anything that human stupidity or malignity has ever devised, and the education its victims impart to *their*

victims is ill-calculated to develop mind or personality. Dr. O'Dwyer, Catholic Bishop of Limerick, told a Royal Commission that "the clergy come out of Maynooth . . . absolutely deficient in all classical education and in all scientific and mathematical education." "The whole philosophical fabric which occupies our colleges is rotten," said the Ultramontane W. G. Ward (see his son's *Life of Newman*, i, 473), "from the floor to the roof." He fiercely denounced the miserable education given by the seminaries, and complained of "our miserable state of intellectual degradation." Lord Acton was no less severe on the shortcomings of a Church which he consistently abused, but which nevertheless succeeded in retaining his allegiance: Rome was afflicted, he said, with "an illiterate episcopate, an ignorant clergy, a prejudiced and divided laity." * Michelet's confirmation of these views was given in the last chapter. The rotten state of many Catholic countries, the poverty of ideas prevalent amongst men who are subject to the Church's deadening influence, cease to astonish us when we reflect that their education is under the direction of people brought up on the intellectual *pabulum* furnished by Liguori, Gury, and teachers of that type, to whose minds the spirit of modern thought was an inspiration from the nether regions.

I may seem to be flogging a dead horse, but, as Catholics still persistently deny that their Church is obscurantist, the facts must be stated once more. It ought to be unnecessary at this time to have to point out that Roman ecclesiastics *do* forbid the reading of "bad" books—books, that is to say, which are calcu-

* Quoted in *Studies in Modernism*, p. 40.

lated to widen the reader's mind and stimulate his imagination; that they do seek to confine education within the narrow bounds marked out by the Curia; but, so long as large numbers of people state the contrary, we are compelled to refute their statements. As usual, I prefer to begin by citing the testimony of Catholics who possess personal knowledge of the facts from the inside. "Don't look, don't read, don't think; listen to us," was Tyrrell's terse summary of the attitude adopted by the English Catholic hierarchy in 1900. Catholicism in England, be it noted, is supposed to be of an exceptionally enlightened type, and the Joint-Pastoral letter of the united English Catholic episcopate was commended by the liberal Pope, Leo XIII, in a letter dated February 11, 1901.* Since that time Pius X and his Jesuit and Ultramontane advisers have plunged the Church much deeper into the obscurantist bog: Rome and its bishops seem to think that men's ears and mouths and eyes ought to be covered up. Their advice is, in effect—Don't look, or you might see something; don't read, or you might learn something; don't think, because thinking broadens and fortifies the mind, and that would be fatal to the Church and her supremacy. "Abide ye here with the ass," as Father Abraham's young men did (Genesis xxii. 5), and don't go roaming about the world, devouring "immoral" literature which may upset your spiritual stomachs, or indulging in "the poison of free inquiry" which, as we know, "has been working for now four centuries" on those troublesome and inquisitive Protestants. A curb must be put on all such mischievous activities. The clerical censor

* *Autobiography of Father George Tyrrell*, ii, 152.

must be allowed a free hand, and theological cases must always be tried *in camerâ*.

Mother Church is always getting into trouble with modern thought and its impertinent probings, and so we now find the Modernists calling in science to aid her in her difficulties. True religious faith, they say quite genuinely, is of various kinds; we must accept and trust revelation of every description. "Is not science from God and for God?" Even orthodox Romanism —which, as I have often pointed out, always has an assorted stock of opinion ready for production on any suitable occasion—professes at times a passion for enlightenment which is quite touching. Has not Cardinal Mercier told us that the Catholic *illuminati* of Belgium "unanimously and spontaneously declared and proved in a document signed by each of them" that Pius X saved the Faith and "protected Science" by his courageous *Pascendi* Encyclical? Most people regard this particular Encyclical as about the most reactionary document that has appeared since Pope Boniface VIII issued his *Unam Sanctam* Bull of 1302; but Science, no doubt, is feeling safer now that she is assured of theological protection. The theologians are great on the "teaching authority of bishops," and the author of *The Pope's Green Island* tells us how one of them lately drew a glowing picture of Catholic Erin, "standing on her sea-girt rock, holding aloft the cross of faith in one hand, and the torch of science in the other." Even Catholic Erin herself was moved by this daring metaphor to irreverent mirth: she happens to possess a keen sense of humour, and she knows very well that her divinely inspired clerical instructors have endowed her with about the worst educational system

in Europe. The Church's pose as scientific instructor to mankind is, of course, only a passing phase; her real attitude in the matter is not open to doubt. The *Pascendi,** the *Lamentabili sane,* and other recent pronouncements from the Vatican have made this abundantly clear. Even liberal-minded and modernist Catholics, like Tyrrell, think that the Catholic scientist has only a "provisional liberty" to prosecute his investigations: he must make his teaching fit in with that of Rome, and wait until the Church is ready to accept his propositions. He must "bear in mind the rights of theology while he studies history, or geology, or biology, etc." †—just as the Irish pig-killer has to bear in mind the rights of theology while he is killing his pigs. Ecclesiastical pronouncements of the more orthodox kind are, of course, far more thoroughgoing than those of the Modernist. They are often "quite inevitable, because of the aggressiveness and impatience of scientific men," who are apt to show a cold-blooded disregard of theology's rights, and ungratefully overlook the fact that theologians "frequently serve the cause of scientific, as well as religious, truth." The fallible human intellect requires the protection of the Curia; the Church is compelled sometimes to take strong measures against intellectual arrogance, and what the *Pascendi* calls "the ravings of philosophers." All these things disturb that Catholic atmosphere which is so essential. Even the Bible is a dangerous book. Christ said, "Search the Scriptures"; but the Fourth

* Procul, procul esto a sacro Ordine novitatum amor!" (Far, far from the Sacred Order be the love of novelties) cried, in accents of terror, the authors of the *Pascendi.* They really had no cause for alarm.

† *Autobiography of Father George Tyrrell,* ii, 101.

Rule of Rome's Congregation of the Index says that nobody shall presume to read or possess them without permission. Awkward questions are apt to be raised by prying minds, but happily an Encyclical or a Pastoral soon sets things right. The man who reads—or even has in his possession—bad (that is, heretical) books incurs excommunication: there must be no autonomy of criticism in the religious domain, or Christianity will fall to pieces. So it comes about that the Church dictates to history what it shall say, to science what it shall teach; commits the absurd error of supposing that her insight is final; and asks us to make the irrelevancies of ancient and mediæval history the basis of our beliefs and behaviour in modern and totally different times. When the scientist turns theologian, and has a few words to say about scriptural doctrine, the Church objects strongly; but she does not hesitate to set herself up as judge of general truth, to make theological dogma the touchstone of scientific, as well as of religious teaching, or to fight the scientific man with all the rusty, but far from ineffective, tools—anathemas, excommunication, and the like—which she has at her disposal. Her theological rights include the right to suppress other people's opinions: from the Olympian heights of a pretended infallibility she hurls her thunderbolts at her keenest intellects from Galileo to Döllinger and Loisy, from Origen to Father Tyrrell.

The *Pascendi* Encyclical asserts without qualification the verbal inspiration of all the Scriptures; in Tyrrell's brilliant words, it affirms the historic and scientific infallibility of the Bible under pain of making God a liar. Rome declared the other day that the prescriptions of the *Pascendi* are still in force: and

"theology posing as revelation" continues to mock science and its discoveries: but why, it may be asked, if the Church's science should prove to be at fault, must we continue to believe in her theology? Joseph le Maistre told us that Genesis suffices for a knowledge of how the world began to be, and the Church remains in substantial accordance with his view. The Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch is still affirmed by the Roman ecclesiastics in direct opposition to all the best theological opinion of our time. If this view be maintained, as formerly, without qualification, the Hebrew lawgiver has achieved the unique distinction of describing his own funeral. He will not tell us the exact place where he was buried, but asserts that it was in the land of Moab, somewhere near Beth-peor, and that the people mourned for him thirty days. He is also quite sure that there never was a prophet since in Israel like himself.*

Impressed probably by these considerations, the Papal Commission on Biblical Studies, 1906, after affirming several times the Mosaic authenticity of the Pentateuch, and stating that the work was approved by Moses and made public under his name, admitted that modifications and alterations may have been introduced into it.† The highly "dangerous" character of such admissions is obvious. Heaven only knows into what abysses of infidelity Mother Church may fall, if she once ventures on the slippery slopes of the Higher Criticism, or casts doubts on the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures in their entirety. It is true that the ecclesiastics say that the additions may have been

* Deuteronomy xxxiv.

† See *Modernism*, by the Rev. A. L. Lilley, p. 142.

" inserted by an inspired author " ; but, as we do not know who the inspired author was, or what modifications he introduced into the text, the statement is not very convincing. An obscurantist and dogmatic priesthood is continually finding itself in a cleft stick. It is compelled either to juggle and tamper with the truth, or to abandon its claims to infallibility and a special divine illumination.

The Christian's God is not only God of Love ; He is also Lord of Light. If the Christian would have faith in God, he must have faith in everything that God has revealed to him. He must open his eyes to every unveiling, not close them obstinately to whatever does not square with his own little prejudices. It is the duty of every man, whether Christian or not, to receive and welcome the light, from whatever quarter it may come, not to shut it out ; to remember that revelations are of all kinds, that many things are known to us of to-day that were hidden from our forefathers, and that more will be revealed to us later. Let us recognize that the world was not made to stand still ; cease to be alarmed by the truth (the truth must not be confounded with Catholic Truth) * and refuse to abandon our tentative searchings after it. A colourless life of pious intentions and purely other-worldly aspirations will never sanctify the " principles that God can be served by believing what is not true," or acquit us of the guilt of stunting our faculties or refusing to exercise the privileges, and to accept the responsibilities, with which we have been charged. To pretend that conjecture amounts to certitude is a mere shirking of

* Truth is said to reside in a well : searchers after Catholic Truth may find it, I believe, in the purlieus of Southwark.

mental responsibility; we must not, in our indolence or cowardice, take on trust things that we have the means of finding out for ourselves. "To be bullied and bowowed out of your loyalty to the God of Light by big Phantasms and three-hatted chimeras: can I call that by the name of nobleness or human courage? —'Could not help it,' say you? If a man cannot help it, a man must allow me to say he has unfortunately given the most conspicuous proof of caitiffhood that lay within his human possibility, and he must cease to brag to me about his 'virtues,' in that sad case!" *

My indictment against the large body of educated Catholics is that they dread the light, just as children dread the dark: they will not follow their thought to its necessary conclusions. They run away from the truth as they would run away from the cholera, and then claim their moral cowardice as a merit. Their religious teachers tell them that truth is dangerous: even the teaching of the Christian's Bible is a peril to their spiritual health, unless administered in very small doses by an experienced practitioner, and accompanied by the soothing syrup of unverifiable Tradition. Free inquiry and liberal opinions are deadly poisons. When assailed by the microbes of Doubt consult a treatise on apologetic or, better still, call in the family physician of souls. Whatever you do, reject the stuff proffered you by the rival doctor from the Modernist camp. He will tell you that his medicine is unpalatable, but, like most unpalatable medicines, highly efficacious: if the cup of knowledge be bitter, he will say, you still must drink it. Do not listen to him.

What the patient probably wants is to give up

* Carlyle's "Jesuitism," in *Latter-Day Pamphlets.*

theological physic altogether and to try a change of spiritual air; he will not forfeit thereby his faith in whatever is worthy of his belief. Let him take for a guide his own conscience, rather than that of another man, and bathe in the refreshing waters of intellectual freedom concerning *all* things. Many of us have stood shivering on the brink, hesitating before taking the final plunge, but, when the first chilly sensation is passed, we find the new element far from disagreeable, and are obliged to confess that we are now much happier in our minds than we ever were before.

CHAPTER XIII

THE MAKING OF CRIPPLES

"Crippling the man to make the believer"
(*Sorrows of Ireland*, by "Pat").

THE bare idea of a mother purposely crippling her child's body, in order to gain some advantage for herself, if such a thing were conceivable, would fill us with horror; but is not the deliberate maiming of the more godlike part of a man, his mind and soul, still more reprehensible? The aim of civilization is to hearten, strengthen, and elevate the individual in the social and moral scale: Rome's aim, as we have seen, is rather to weaken and to depress him, to force him to lean throughout life on ecclesiastical crutches. We say with Ruskin, "Raise the man as high as you can"; let him try to touch the stars. "On the contrary," Mother Church replies, "keep him down that I may rule." The policy of the Jesuits, as Michelet showed, has always been "to reduce and to lessen, to make minds weak and false, to make the little very little, and turn the simple into idiots: a mind nourished with trifles, and amused with toys, must be easy to govern." The mystic Molinos, the great Spanish Quietist, or deadener of other people's souls, reinforces the doctrine with some admirable words: "To act, is the deed of the novice; to suffer, is immediate gain; to die, is perfection." His ideal man is a sort of paralytic who is the sport of other people's volition,

and does nothing except under outside compulsion: the sooner he dies, the better for him. Whilst alive (his advice is) "walk as if thou wert blindfolded, not thinking or reasoning." Molinos, I regret to say, died in prison. His theory was that sin is a ladder by which we may climb to heaven; the more we sin the higher we mount, and he put his principles into practice, and rather too often. That, at any rate, is Michelet's version; but some writers say that he was the innocent victim of Jesuit persecution. It seems fairly clear that he made full confession of his faults, and so escaped death, though two of his followers were burned alive by the gentle Inquisitors of a Church which had previously given its official approbation to the mystic's doctrine!

Quietism is dead as a formal philosophy, but its supreme principle of annihilating the self, * and lulling the human will to sleep, is still very much alive in the Church, and is a useful aid to her absolutist methods. Modern man, however, is animated by very different ideas, inflamed with higher aspirations. Human nature, starved for lack of mental nutrition, cries out for the bread of knowledge: Mother Church gives the infant a few crumbs, just to keep the life in it, and no more. Men hunger for mental and moral strength, knowledge, independence, and the opportunity to use these things: women thirst for greater fullness of life. The hungry sheep look up, they are not fed: all that Romanism

* Michelet quotes the characteristic Quietist salutation of that amorous pietist and director of female youth, Desmarets de St. Sorlin, to a lady penitent: "I embrace you, my very dear dove, in your nonentity, being a perfect nullity myself, each of us being all in our All, by our amiable Jesus," etc. Love, he thought, is sovereign. Lull the will to sleep, and "the soul, losing nonentity in its infinity," will be gently annihilated in the bosom of love.

offers them is the cold consolation of barren endeavour and useless renunciations, to be followed by a problematical eternity of enchantment—dependent, however, on the personal goodwill of the Church's ministers. The Church still thinks that the world and its men and women were made for her, not she for them. Man, as she regards him, is a sort of big baby in the hands of a clerical nurse: when he calls out for a man's full meal of knowledge she bids him be content with a nursery tea. He claims, as his due, the fullest opportunity of self-development; he is conscious of possessing a personality, mental gifts and powers, a will to self-betterment, which, if properly used, will enable him to rise higher. He demands, as of right, that he shall be accorded a full chance of making the best of his life, of his psychic and intellectual self. The Church's response to these demands is—what we have seen in the preceding pages.

A seminary is considered by ecclesiastics—most erroneously, in my opinion—to be a place that fits a man for the society of his Maker: a school or university, on the other hand, is a place of *general* education, designed to give people a training that shall fit them for their life and work in the present world. Newman tried, as we know, to impress this fact on the Irish bishops, but the attempt resulted in disastrous failure. Only think of it! The Rector of a national university felt it incumbent on him to address the following words to the prelates who managed it: "We should be shirking our plain duty, gentlemen, did we leave out Literature from Education." * "Why do we educate except to prepare for the world?" he asked;

* *The Idea of a University*, Lecture IX.

but the average Catholic educator has his eye fixed on the other world. He is still bound by the old mediæval shackles: he educates in order to prepare—in his own peculiar way—for heaven. The Church, judged as a whole, cannot distinguish between a centre of learning and a seminary. Though she has an exaggerated respect for dead languages and the outworn methods of the past, even her classical scholarship, as we understand the word, is apt to be sadly lacking in distinction. I am shocked, for instance, by the Latin of St. Alphonsus Liguori, Rome's great divine and prince of moral theologians: it is even more execrable than his morality, and that is saying a great deal. As to modern subjects, they interest Catholic teachers far less than scholastic subtleties and mediæval speculations. In their elementary schools much time is spent —wasted, as we should say—over catechisms, ritual, liturgies and the like. In the higher branches of learning similar failings and disabilities are apparent.

In some cases the Catholic university is used as a weapon of Church party politics, a thing to fight the Protestants with, rather than as an instrument of education. Indeed, comparatively few Roman prelates are seriously interested in real education: they wholly fail to appreciate its necessity, and scarcely know what it means. Their diagnosis in matters of mind or character lacks depth and insight. The men who dominate Catholic mental training have a very natural dread of the modern scientific and critical spirit, but without these indispensables how can education be otherwise than incomplete? With us secondary education is a natural continuation of the secular course of study given in the primary schools: denominationalism,

even at Oxford or Cambridge, is now becoming a mere shadow or phantom of the past. The Catholic school or university, on the other hand, is an integral part of the Church. For instance, Mr. Siegfried says that the Higher Council of the great Laval University in Quebec is composed of the Episcopate of the Province, and the duties of Rector belong *ex officio* to the head of the great seminary.

We have seen how the influence of the Church is retained over men engaged in secular occupation of all kinds; and it is no less infused into every branch of education, which, in the eyes of Rome, is only a branch of religion. Mr. Siegfried tells us how he asked a Jesuit master what sort of philosophy he taught. "Aristotle and St. Thomas," was his reply. He only spoke of the more modern philosophers to confute them: "They are contrary to the doctrines of the Church," he said. The Catholic university's, or school's, business is like that of the Church; its function is to produce, not good citizens, but good Catholics; the things it teaches are not exclusively intended for use in the world outside the seminary. Neither teachers nor pupils have any real intellectual independence; and the men who control education insist upon a formalism and officialism which is apt to be fatal to mental vigour and freedom. Mr. Ryan says that the more enlightened priests in Ireland admit that the bishops who direct the course of study have "not the dimmest understanding" of the pupil's real needs, and where Newman failed hopelessly lesser men are not likely to succeed. Now and again the vigour of some exceptional personality may infuse life into the dead body of an outworn system; but the general rule is

that the masses must not employ their reason about things which are really fundamental, because a liberal education is dangerous and tends to subvert faith. This reactionary system works downwards through the secondary schools to the most elementary schools of the primary grade.

Let me, at the risk of seeming rash or presumptuous, state what I mean by education. In my view it is a preliminary training of mind, body, and character, for life in *all* its aspects, a drawing out (*educo*) of the best that there is of *all* kinds in human nature. "How to *live*—that is the essential question for us," said Herbert Spencer. "*To prepare us for complete living* is the function which education has to discharge." Ruskin deplored the prevalence of opposite tendencies, declaring that "we were all plunged as in a languid dream—our hearts fat, and our eyes heavy, and our ears closed, lest the inspiration of hand or voice should reach us—lest we should see with our eyes, and understand with our hearts, and be healed." *

Ruskin's eloquent words deserve the earnest attention of all who bear authority, Protestants and Catholics alike. Those of us who are parents know that the education of our children is, in these days, a more serious matter than ever it was before: if we fail to do our best for them and to improve their prospects—in the present world as well as in the hereafter—we are incurring a very grave responsibility. I wish to avoid any overstatement in what is a somewhat delicate topic; but the subject is one of great importance, and must not be shirked. Few independent

* *Sesame and Lilies*, § 107: see *Ruskin on Education*, by W. Jolly.

judges, I take it, will contend that the education, in the sense of the word given above, which a boy gets in a Romanist school, even in England, is equal to that which he would receive at, say, Rugby, Winchester, or Shrewsbury. To begin with, the teachers, though often excellent, are drawn from a far more limited class, and masters of high grade are not always easy to procure in these times. The war has made the provision of competent teachers a matter of increasing difficulty in all English schools, public and private, especially the latter; and Catholic headmasters have a more restricted field to choose from. Moreover, the instruction given in Romanist schools is largely tinged with sectarianism, fenced round with the Church's numerous restrictions, and these hinder full mental development: too much time and attention are devoted to purely formal and religious matters. The dead hand of clericalism is still at work in Catholic education, and Quietism, as we have seen, has not ceased to plunge men in its "languid dream." Enlightened Catholic parents, who have sufficient means, send their sons to Oxford or Cambridge, where they may make up for any possible deficiencies in their early training, and become fitted for their tasks in life. 'Many Catholics, however, do not approve of this; and, in any case, most boys do not get the chance of going to a university.

Nor is the Catholic school, with its hostile attitude towards independence and spontaneity, its "protective" methods and religious sentimentalism, adapted to the development of strong personality or manly, straightforward character, in the same way as our Public Schools, with all their patent and much-

advertised faults, tend to develop these qualities. Tyrrell indulges in some very plain speaking on the subject of Jesuit schools and colleges, and the results of their cramping, "sheltering" system of training. "Is it not notorious," he asks in his letter to Father Martin, General of the Society of Jesus, "that the schoolboys whom you train on these principles, and who . . . are abruptly thrust forth into the world for whose conditions they are wholly unprepared—is it not notorious that those boys come to grief morally and religiously with a frequency that points unambiguously to a fault in the methods of their education?" * Romanist education fails, in short, to "prepare for complete living": it does not correspond with Milton's description of "a complete and generous education, that which fits a man to perform justly, skilfully, and magnanimously, all the duties of all offices," while the virtues it inculcates are of that fugitive and cloistered kind which the great poet justly scorned. By distrusting life, and seeking to avoid all risks, it ends by incurring much greater risks; it makes of religion a prison-house of the human soul.

The Church, as is made abundantly clear, is inflexibly opposed to the fullest enlightenment of her flocks. Her priests, as a body, are themselves sadly lacking in what men nowadays regard as culture; in this matter they are supervised by the episcopate no less rigorously than the laity. There is great difficulty in securing competent material for the priesthood, and the intellectual qualification is reduced to a very low level. Mr. McCabe, who knows his subject well, gives

* *Autobiography*, ii, 488.

a melancholy picture * of the mental training given to the men who control education in an iron grip. Himself a professor of philosophy who had studied for some time under Cardinal Mercier at Louvain, an exceptionally able man (as we know) and far ahead of the bulk of his fellow-students, he found himself, when he left the Church, unable to earn £2 a week, and a friend, Mr. Forbes of Balliol, regretfully told him that his "education" was quite useless. His case was by no means a solitary one: some of his colleagues left the Church and tried to earn a living, but failed and had to return. An impression prevails, especially among ladies in certain sections of London Society, that the Jesuits are men of overpowering intellect, possessing vast stores of learning and a ripe scholarship. They have some brilliant men, no doubt; but Mr. McCabe states roundly that the standard of scholarship amongst Jesuits, Benedictines, and other religious Orders is "disreputable."

The obscurantism of Rome, the mental stagnation and mediocrity of large masses of Catholics, constitute a terrible tax on the effective life and manhood within our Empire. From the statesman's point of view this means that several millions of potentially serviceable and efficient citizens are partially crippled; and the matter is a very grave one in these days when we need every ounce of brain, muscle, grit, and energy that our sadly diminished population can supply. Mr. Lloyd George's warning that an A1 Empire cannot be run with a C3 population applies to mental and moral capacity, no less than to physical. A young man cannot learn to swim in troubled waters unless he goes

* *The Popes and their Church*, p. 222.

into them, said Newman; and he was profoundly right. "You have shut up from him those whose thoughts strike home to our hearts," cried the university Rector in his indignation: "you have refused him the masters of human thought." But the whole spirit of Rome remains opposed to the march of intellect; the clerical atmosphere still acts as a blight on culture. The priests cannot, or will not, see that a "runaway asceticism," coupled with a persistent shirking of pressing problems and a shocking perversion of historical and scientific fact, is the worst possible preparation for the battle of life. And why has the Church adopted towards her children these cruel methods, this selfish and man-destroying course? Simply because the great thoughts of the world's finest brains, which are the noblest heritage of the human race, would tend to brace men's minds and characters, and so make them less submissive slaves.

Our mentors are fond of reminding us that we are entering on a new world: the mediæval winter is "receding, and the summer sun of civilization is bringing into leaf and flower a thousand forms of luxurious enjoyment." These are not the metaphors of a Modernist freethinker or a Rationalist; the speaker is—John Henry Newman! describing the days of St. Philip Neri. The men of to-day know that they have got to work harder now than ever they worked before, but they also have a firm determination to make life better worth living than it used to be. Above all else, they demand freedom for the development of body and soul: they will not submit to the devitalizing uniformity manufactured by an ecclesiastical machine, or be tied throughout their lives to the apron-strings

of mediæval mental discipline. After the great upheaval of our time, amid the new life that is pulsing around us, modern democracy will not find the ideal of corpse-like obedience at all to its taste: Rome's "You must" will fall on deaf ears. Braced by the tonic of war, of sorrow, and of suffering, mankind enters the unknown country that lies before it with a new resolution. Its present exaggerated, and somewhat raw, impatience of authority's shackles will abate in the reaction from the fever and excitement of the crisis, but to ask of it slavish obedience is to ask in vain. It means to face life and its problems—it is not, like the Church, afraid of them—on its own responsibility. Can the Roman ecclesiastics suppose that in this new world any large section of humanity will consent cheerfully to the doom of lifelong intellectual sterility, seek their minds' nourishment amongst the dry bones of scholasticism, make the Church their one schoolmaster, or accommodate their ethical standards to the filth and fatuity of Liguori, Gury, and the other moral theologians? What sort of doctrine and guidance these latter gentlemen provide us with in the sphere of human conduct we will now proceed to inquire.

CHAPTER XIV

ROME'S MORAL FAILURE

I. The Facts

> "Morality is not our highest life. . . . The apocalyptic elements of Christianity are essential and not accidental, the moral elements subordinate" (*Christianity at the Cross-Roads*).

That extreme piety is not incompatible with a total lack of ethical scruple is a proposition which is now generally admitted, and the whole history of ecclesiasticism furnishes abundant proof of its essential truth. A Catholic layman should not touch morals, but, not being a Catholic, I am about to commit this act of profanity; and one of my chief reasons is that, on the testimony of enlightened Catholics, lay morals are now so much better than Church morals. It is nearly three hundred years since the Church was adjudged a moral bankrupt by Pascal, and she has ever since been vainly seeking to obtain her discharge. The events of the last few years, especially the attitude of the Pope and the Hierarchy towards moral issues during the war, will now make that discharge more difficult than ever to obtain. The low moral state of Catholic countries is not, as a rule, denied by Catholics, but criticism is met by the rejoinder that, as immorality in these countries has no "general tendency" to disturb belief, the mixture of deliberate evil with faith is not, comparatively speaking, a thing of any great conse-

quence; if only faith holds, nothing else seems to matter much. Roman Christianity sets ritual before righteousness, and right belief—that is to say, the belief enjoined by an imperious theocracy—before both; it is only "subordinately" a religion of righteousness, as Tyrrell says, and this notion is developed at some length in his *Christianity at the Cross-Roads*. It is true that later on he seems somewhat to modify his views, and to raise ethical perfection from the lowly position to which the Church had relegated it, and to make it something desirable in itself, apart from the lustre and merit it obtains from grace. We seem to hear Rome saying to morality through the mouth of the Modernist, "Friend, go up higher!" but the general attitude of the Church towards virtue remains in strict accordance with Tyrrell's earlier statements.

This attitude is made perfectly clear in the voluminous "Moral Theology" of the Church. "Love God, and then do what thou wilt," said St. Augustine—a very dangerous doctrine, however Catholics may interpret it. The "merely natural virtues," such as truth, honesty, continence, and the like, are worth little by themselves, divorced from supernatural grace and priestly ministrations; the "moralizing tendencies," so dear to the heart of liberal Protestantism, are greatly to be deplored. The divines of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries laid it down that intention (in the spiritual sense) governs the quality of action, and Liguori's codification of their rulings has been formally endorsed by the Church. Man's ultimate destiny is bound up with faith and formal religion, rather than with conduct and character. It is the

" affective states of the soul " and its " dispositions " that are of vital importance as guides to conduct and thought; the moral element is conditional and subsidiary in Christ's teaching, the transcendental alone is paramount. Sin belongs to religion, not to morality, in the theologian's view: a life of very average morality, with frequent sacraments, is said to be more pleasing to God (how do they know this?) than a life of heroic morality without them. To glorify God is better than to purge the conscience. There is no reward for the outward righteousness of the hand; all is vanity but what is done to the glory of God, says Newman in his *Anglican Difficulties*. The value of morality by itself is evanescent; it may serve to keep us afloat awhile in a perishing world, but mere ethical goodness can never save us. We must turn our thoughts from the external crime to the inward imagination. Real sin consists, not in overt acts, but in the thoughts of the heart; it would seem, in fact, that a genuine saint cannot sin. The one thing needful is " the inward righteousness of the heart." *

The above are the general principles of the Church as expounded by her finest minds. Some of the mystics and visionaries go much further; they deliberately compromised with evil because, as they say, it has been found that sensual gratification may be " turned into a spiritual form of rejoicing." They pay

* Our modern stage supplies us with a curious parallel to these ethical theories. The refrain of a popular song, with which the late Mrs. John Wood nightly rejoiced her audiences, stated, in accordance with the best Roman theology, that

> It don't matter what you *do*,
> If your *heart* be only true;
> And his heart *was* true to Poll!

a tribute to moral obliquity, and say that sin is directly beneficial in some cases. Molinos thought that, pride being the greatest sin, "God makes virtues of our vices, and these very vices, by which the Devil thought to cast us into the pit, become a ladder to mount to heaven." This doctrine was well received, says Michelet; and other Romanist writers tell us that sin gives an occasion for repentance, which is good for the soul; so it would appear that the more we sin the higher we mount.

Let us see how these theories work out in practice. As I have said, the low moral state of most Catholic countries is not seriously contested; the facts are too patent. Statisticians tell us that the criminality of the Catholic population in Great Britain is approximately four times greater than that of the heretics. All history, police records, recent statistics of crime and lawlessness, the pictures drawn by Catholic writers of life in these and former days among their co-religionists, prove the Latin Church to be a disastrous failure as a moral agent all over the world. In respect of homicide, dishonesty, untruthfulness, lawlessness, and licentiousness the Church's adherents have an especially bad record. Liguori's works, with their minute analysis of filthy vice and crime, form a scathing commentary on the morality that was then, and before his time, prevalent in countries under the Church's influence; but the people could at least plead that they were no worse than a large number of their religious mentors. Depravity and piety went hand in hand: the moral sense of the world has steadily improved as the Church's influence has declined. Rome has only one valid test of morality—

the good of the Church. The condition, moral, mental, and sanitary, of the Papal States under Pius IX was such that some liberal-minded people regretted their disappearance: the secular power of Rome stood forth to the world's gaze as the drunken helot among governments, an object-lesson to mankind of the evils of the Papacy. The Church, in short, has failed ethically no less than socially, and I have recently discovered a curiously relevant, and perfectly logical, argument in support of her claim to possess a superhuman origin and authority. It comes from a monk of Teutonic descent and sceptical views who, in the sixteenth century, had doubts as to Rome's pretensions to be the real Church of Christ. His qualms were removed by what he saw in the Holy City. Such an utterly blackguardly institution, said he, could not possibly have survived, if it were not divinely sustained. Happily for the Holy See, the morals of its disciples though far from perfect, are often much better than those which its recognized teachers assure us are sufficient for our salvation. The Church, as many Catholic writers have pointed out, has often been saved by her laity; the secular conscience, like the secular culture, is greatly superior to that of the ecclesiastics, and receives a more universal recognition. The clerical attempt to lower ethics in the scale of religious values has only been partially successful, but it has left its mark on the world. If men are rejecting religion to-day, it is in no small measure owing to the sort of religion which Rome has been offering mankind for the last fifteen centuries. Faith fails when it requires men to believe, or to do, what they know is not right. The Dean of St. Paul's has replied wittily

to the people who complained during the war that the teaching of Christ has failed in Europe: Christianity has not failed, Dr. Inge said, because it has never been tried. The Church certainly has not tried it herself, and she has entirely failed, if she ever seriously made the attempt, to persuade the mass of her followers to try it. At the same time that she affects, in certain directions, an absurd and impossible propriety,* she offers us a moral code that is quite primitive in its deficiencies. While reducing, for the bulk of mankind, the claims of duty and conscience to their lowest and meanest terms, and parading a half-hearted insistence on negative virtues at the expense of active ones, she lays on large numbers of her disciples various absurd obligations, such as celibacy, monastic or conventual vows, morbid self-introspection, and sundry kinds of ascetic practices. These obligations not only have no ethical value, they are, on the contrary—in the case of celibacy, at any rate—productive of gross immorality. If the morals and the social conditions of Catholic countries are low, as representative Catholics admit, it is largely because the Church has been unfaithful to the trust reposed in her, placed policy before duty, and bidden for the support of the man in the street by offering him a low ethical standard which his better nature despises and rejects. He knows very well that there is an Authority of Conscience which no chicanery can evade or dictation override—which is more valid than that of any Pope.

* I know a case where a girl was always compelled, in an excellent and up-to-date convent school, to wear a nightgown while taking a bath, lest her sense of propriety should be shocked by the sight of her own body. In other cases, I have since learned, the reason given is that God might see the bather's person.

II. THE CAUSE

"Nulla adest obligatio carnalibus motibus positive resistendi, cum talis resistentia subinde magis illos excitet; multo minus necessaria est resistentia materialis." (We are under no obligation positively to resist carnal passions, when such resistance forthwith inflames them the more; much less necessary is material resistance.)
"Nec item tenemur ad positivam resistentiam adversus quamlibet tentationem, quæ diu protrahatur; hoc enim nimis molestum, et innumeris scrupulis obnoxium, foret." (Nor, in like manner, are we bound positively to resist *any* sort of temptation, when it is greatly protracted; for this would be over-irksome, and would expose one to innumerable anxieties.) (*Compendium of Moral Theology* [1890 Edition], by Father Gury, the most authoritative writer on the subject during recent years. Vol. i, 182 [4], [6].)

A religion which tells people that they need not withstand temptation when it becomes a bore, and that resistance to sexual desire is unnecessary when such resistance only serves to excite it, is sure to be popular; and we have it on the high authority of Cardinal Newman that a popular religion is sure to be corrupt. Catholics may say that morality of this kind is no prejudice to the sanctity of their Church, but the modern world can hardly be expected to endorse such views: the cynical indifference displayed by the Vatican to German crime and cruelty still rankles in the public mind. Men are beginning to recognize that, as was said by a Catholic ten years ago, the moral sense of the world has grown in spite of the Church, rather than by her agency; that the secular conscience is a finer instrument than the ecclesiastical for the world's betterment; and that it is now the business of the State to teach the Church how to behave. The Reformation made for virtue; the Counter-Reformation, started by the Jesuits in the sixteenth century,

made, if not exactly for sin, at least for extreme laxity. We shall have to moralize Rome and its clergy, instead of their trying to moralize us : we must also, it may be parenthetically remarked, teach them that truth and opinion are two very different things. We shall require an answer to the very pertinent question, why, if we cannot believe in the Church as an ethical teacher, we should be expected to believe implicitly in her theological inspiration.

Let us briefly state why we cannot believe in Rome as a moral educator. It is because its teaching, so far from being abreast of the age, is actually very far behind the conceptions of the modern lay moralist. Nay, more, it is inferior in many respects to the conceptions of primitive men. That worthy old Egyptian sage, Ptah Hetep, who flourished some 5500 years ago, would have been greatly scandalized by the principles of St. Liguori. Ptah Hetep loved the truth : he said, " He who wresteth the truth in transmitting a message . . . is an abominable person." * He also deprecated mischief-making ; he told his countrymen that they must not terrify the people, or " beat down the other man " for their own advantage, or God would punish them. The ethics of the Babylonian Code of Khammurabi, 2250 years B.C., was superior on the whole to the ethic of the Roman organization, which " beats down the other man " in order to make itself powerful, and avowedly seeks to attract adherents by making the path to salvation as easy as possible. Men are so corrupt, it says, that the Church must make concessions to human frailty ; she must come to terms with sinners and lower her standard to them. She

* *History of Egyptian Literature*, by Dr. Wallis Budge, p. 226.

preserves her rule by *not* ruling in a moral sense, conciliates by free gifts of pardon and absolution, and by shutting her eyes to what she does not wish to see. Liguori, the *Catholic Encyclopædia* tells us, "saw the harm done by rigorism"; the Church, like Newman, thinks that "to ask more would be to lose all." "Our aim is to accommodate ourselves to all sorts of persons," said Pascal's Jesuit in the ninth Provincial Letter; Mother Church must not be too hard on her children; she must be, in Pascal's words, "fearless towards God, timid towards men," or her empire will be endangered. If abandoning sin causes you personal inconvenience, don't abandon it: climb up to heaven on the Devil's back. "Sin in order that you may repent and obtain forgiveness," said that eminent Russian divine, Gregory Rasputin; in order to repent efficaciously it behoves one first to sin; and he was only repeating what he had learned from his mentors of a sister Church. "Only what brings harm is sin, and when the advantage exceeds the harm, then sin becomes even a virtue," as an eminent German Jesuit sagely observes.

"Vice does not involve a neglect of the external duties of religion," says Newman *; and that fact appears to be for him, as for many other good Catholics, a sufficient consolation. An old woman "genuflects before the Blessed Sacrament, and then steals her neighbour's handkerchief." To the freethinker the genuflection is perhaps, under the circumstances, an offence against good taste; to the Protestant it is a blasphemous aggravation of the accompanying crime; to the Catholic it is a saving act of formal religion and a token of faith, which in his eyes is far more important

* *Anglican Difficulties*, Lecture IX.

than any virtuous conduct. The points of view in these three cases are wholly different; but what we have to consider is the probability that people will not regard in a very serious light offences against the moral law when they are told that morality is entirely secondary and subordinate to belief in dogma; that faith, formal acts of religion, and priestly mediation will wipe out, or greatly mitigate, the consequences of their evil acts. Catholics are always looking for "logical sequences" as the tests of doctrinal development; they would do well to apply their logical faculties to the sphere of human conduct, and recognize that the teaching of Rome is a connivance at evil and a toleration of what is unholy. A Church whose doctrines encourage lax conduct, who tells us that low social conditions (such as promote immorality and an inferior civilization) among her adherents are no prejudice to her sanctity, is a Church that creates bad or inefficient citizens; and we have seen that a very considerable number of Catholics in our Empire fall under the latter category.

The moral theology of Rome, which is a sort of codification of its ethical laws, has been a plant of very slow growth. It has taken many centuries for it to attain its present state of highly unethical perfection. The Jesuits, who are now dogmatically identified with the Church, came to the conclusion many years ago that, in order to cement their power, they must have a definite theory of what was allowable, or not allowable, in human conduct; and they proceeded to frame a code, or body of doctrine, which should be an application of the moral law to concrete instances and, at the same time, be useful in social and political exigences.

Thus arose the great latitudinarian doctrine of "Probabilism," which contains the distilled essence of all Jesuit teaching. Probabilism says that any action is allowable for an ordinary layman, if it is supported by the "probable" opinion of some person possessing learning or insight. A "probable" opinion is not one which is more probably true than false, but an opinion which has *some* show of reason or probability in its favour. Probabilism is of various kinds: (1) strict, which says that only the "safer" (*tutior*) opinion can be followed; (2) Æqui-Probabilism (originated by Liguori on lines laid down by the sixteenth-century Jesuit, Luis Molina) which says that you may act as you please—even against your conscience, some authors say—when the betting is even, so to speak; that is to say, when there are about as many reasons for as there are against your action, the more indulgent opinion may be followed. Æqui-Probabilism shades off naturally and by easy stages into (3) Lax Probabilism, which boldly asserts that you may follow the "less safe" opinion, even though it may be the less probable. The subtlety of the casuists invented all sorts of minor distinctions. Under this system any fool, as I think Pascal remarks, can find a justificatory plea for any sort of iniquity.

Luis Molina may have invented Probabilism, as we now know it, but the germ of the theory lies in the works of much earlier writers of authority: its real founder, some say, was St. Thomas Aquinas. One valid reason for establishing the doctrine was the necessity of reconciling, or at least palliating, the inconsistencies and opposing *dicta* of confessors, which caused much moral confusion in the Church and

sometimes grave scandal. Liguori was the most successful among the casuists in bringing about a certain degree of uniformity in the decisions of confessors, and to this fact is due in large measure the present fame of the man who has been called "the darling of the Jesuits." The mischievous tendency of such doctrines as those of the casuists is obvious. Any conduct which some divine of fair standing considers defensible —or which can, by the exercise of a little ingenuity, be inferred to be defensible in his opinion—is considered lawful. Any opinion that can be brought into apparent conformity with the doctrines of any single writer of authority may be safely accepted and acted upon, even though the confessor may think it wrong: the confessor must condone things which he and others well know to be grave sins. Michelet's remark that the Jesuits "by indulgence and connivance exterminated morality" is somewhat of an overstatement; but they certainly did, by the manufacture of pretexts and ingenious sophistries, furnish loopholes for conscience and compromise with evil of all kinds. The casuist begins, as a rule, with a prelude of rigid severity; he recommends strict observance of the moral code, but couches the remainder of his utterances in a very different strain. He amiably supplies us (Liguori affords a sufficient and shining example of these tactical methods) with such a multitude of excuses, qualifying words and limitations, exceptions, palliatives, conditions, and casuistical side-propositions, which afford opportunities for the evasion of obvious duties, that black is made to look white, and the effect of the teacher's preliminary admonitions towards virtue is practically cancelled. Fine principles are laid down,

and then contradicted or whittled away. Terms are introduced which practically make the observance of the affirmed principle a matter of option; the sinner is given an opportunity of "sinning conscienciously." Whenever found convenient, an allowable practice is easily enlarged into a plenary permission.

Romanism in this way seeks to widen the circle of its influence by enticing the coy spirits of frail humanity to enter the meshes of its net. The bait used is the furnishing of pleas and justifications for self-indulgence, and sometimes for actual iniquity. The Church is made to appear an agreeable refuge for easygoing people, especially those of an "artistic" turn of mind, who are repelled by the alleged coldness, austerity, and provincialism of the Protestant Churches. Rome demands no such effort on the sinner's part as they do. It will make the rugged paths soft and easy for you, broaden and smooth the narrow way to salvation. The Church may not tell you, like the celebrated Père Bauny, quoted by Pascal in his Ninth Letter, that you may reach Paradise by simply saying *bonjour* to the Virgin in the morning, and *bonsoir* at night; but she will substitute for Bauny's *dévotion aisée* a scarcely less easy morality. "Rigorism" does such a terrible lot of harm; to attempt too much is only to lose all. Well might Pascal say in his Sixth Letter, "I must say, my Father, it seems better to have to do with people who have no religion!" A good many people are thinking—and saying—similar things in these days; when they read of Rome's record in the Great War, and the grave discredit which has attached itself to the Church's name, they agree with Father Tyrrell's remark, "I cannot help laying half the sins and errors

of the world on ecclesiastical shoulders." Transcendental righteousness, divorced from effective moral principle, is delightfully soothing and picturesque—its settings are said to be highly "artistic"; but what has it done, what is it doing now, for a world in travail?

The Church, as I have often remarked, always has opinions suitable for all occasions, severe principles for severe people, lax ones for lax folk. As the lax folk greatly outnumber the strict ones, so Rome's lax principles vastly exceed the severe ones in number and authority; and among the multitude of moral codes and opinions the transgressor can easily find one, or more than one, to soothe an uneasy conscience. The Church is polite to people who want to get to heaven on easy terms; her moralists are nice, kind, accommodating men, holding out the hand of fellowship to the whole world. In the old days there was great rivalry in the granting of indulgence by directors and confessors, each outbidding the other in the competition for the penitent's custom. "Absolution going cheap to-day," they said in effect; a species of rate-cutting in relaxations and pardons took place, and sometimes the price accepted was very low indeed.

The scandal reached its height at the period of the Reformation, which was largely due to it; and it would be a great mistake to suppose that it is wholly abated to-day. Ecclesiastics, as Tyrrell says, run religion as business men might run a theatre—for profit to themselves. "They favour laxity or sanctity according to their market value, and, as a rule, it pays better to cater for the groundlings than for the elect few." They still take pride in whittling away duty and morality to their "lowest and meanest terms,"

and tell men they may qualify for the eternal kingdom without abandoning their earthly vices. Liguori and his disciple, Gury, continue the traditions of Escobar, Diana, Sanchez and the other older casuists. These men have, between them, elevated to a science equivocation and various other forms of lying. Their treatises, from Escobar in the sixteenth century down to Gury in the nineteenth, on mental reservation and prevarication form a justificatory compendium of deceit and tergiversation on approved principles—the whole Art of Dissimulation set out in attractive form and described as " Moral Theology." St. Alphonsus Liguori, anticipating the doctrine of Gury quoted at the head of this section, not only condones, but expressly sanctions, the most obscene, degrading, and pernicious practices, if the temptation to indulge in them is potent * ; and the Church pronounces his doctrines to be very good.

Non-Catholic opinion places outward observance of religion on a lower plane than moral sacrifice : with Christ it says, " by their fruits ye shall know them." The Church tells us, on the contrary, that the quality of action is governed by the intention ; and this means a good deal more in theological, than it does in legal, phraseology. She can so " regulate the motive," and " purify the intention," of the wrongdoer (without, however, preventing the wrongdoing) and weave such a subtle web of justificatory apology, that every crime in the Decalogue can be considered lawful. The disposition is much more important than mere outward acts : indeed, the latter are " of no account whatever, apart from the character which produced them."

* *Moral Theology*, iii, 483.

What matter what you do, if only your heart be true to Mother Church and her doctrine? If you sin—why, sin may be a means of purifying the soul through repentance; in any case there is always "the easy absolution round the corner," a kindly old (or young) gentleman in a black robe ready and willing to wipe the slate clean; and, though your sin be as scarlet, if you can only quote Liguori in your favour, the poor man runs a grave risk of mortal sin if he refuses you absolution. The road to sanctification lies through belief; faith is the only real and fundamental moral exigency, and submission to Rome's commands will secure for you its powerful mediation in celestial quarters. The Roman Curia does not really care twopence about morals; all it wants is our obedience.

Priestcraft, in the noble words of Pascal, "makes God less the enemy of sin than man." It has been said that Rome, by thus compromising with frivolity and worldliness, does not do it with a view of assisting the Devil, but of augmenting its influence by making terms with sinners. This coquetry with sin—one is tempted to say sometimes, this deliberate encouragement of evil—is a salient characteristic of the Romanist system. Mother Church worships God with all her heart, but she cannot help at the same time indulging in the luxury of an occasional flirtation with the Devil. In fact, she could hardly get on without him; he is essential to her scheme of doctrine and authority. He frightens her naughty children, and gives her a hundred opportunities for the exercise of her alleged miraculous powers. She would never think of insulting him by suggesting that he is only an imaginary person, a sort of infernal Mrs. Harris, with a purely allegorical

existence. Satan is for Rome a very real entity; he possesses us until the Church exorcises him with her enchantments; if he were not there to possess us she would lose the credit and profit which attaches to her when she expels him with her anathemas from our persons. So it comes about that, while she utters her "Apage, Sathana," the Church really has quite a kindly feeling towards him. He forms a strong bulwark of her prestige: the dualism of Good and Evil, the contest of Ormuz and Ahriman, is as necessary to the Roman theory of the universe as it was to that of the Persians. If man were not wicked, the priest's *métier* would be gone.

The so-called science of casuistry has been described as applied morality: in the hands of its greatest Catholic professors it has become applied immorality. Scarified by Pascal, and execrated by the civilized world, it has been reinstated in its pride of place by Liguori, whose works, blessed by the Church, are now the cornerstone of the system. It has since been confirmed and strengthened by Father Gury, new editions of whose works are being continually brought out. We hear on all sides that sexual immorality greatly increased during the war, and it is still troubling the nation's conscience. Is this a time to tell men and women that they need not resist carnal temptations whenever resistance becomes irksome? Happily, we know that this clerical advice will not be universally followed, that the practice of Catholics is fortunately better than their theory, and that the conscience of the layman rises above the teaching that is offered him. He has naturally more sense and more decency than a moral theologian, but that does not excuse the

theologian from the discredit which attaches to every man who disseminates poisonous doctrine.

The Roman organization, having selected Liguori as its moral guide, and trumpeted forth his merits to the world, has forfeited its right to direct the conscience of mankind. For the individual, its rules of conduct are unethical and absurd. In the commerce of nations, in the sphere of public and international rectitude, the Papacy, as we have seen, is now bankrupt: when the nations seek a prophet of righteousness in political affairs they do not dream of going to Benedict XV; they much prefer a layman, such as President Wilson. They intuitively feel that the best ethical instincts of our age are to be found outside the Churches, and that Rome's precepts, so far from suggesting the divine inspiration which is claimed for them, are repugnant to the most ordinary human conceptions of right and wrong. For this grave depreciation in the moral currency of the Papacy nobody is more to blame than its chosen apostle in the ethical domain, St. Alphonsus Liguori. Curiously enough, however, not one Protestant Englishman in a thousand appears to have ever so much as heard the name of this remarkable saint, on whose head Rome has showered semi-divine honours which no other Doctor of the Church—not even St. Augustine or St. Thomas Aquinas—has ever received. I propose, therefore, to give some account of his life and teaching, and to discuss how far the high esteem in which he is held by Rome can be regarded as justifiable.

CHAPTER XV

"THE PRINCE OF MORAL THEOLOGIANS"

"St. Alphonsus said nothing in his *Moral Theology* which is not the common teaching of Catholic theologians" ("St. Alphonsus Liguori," in the *Catholic Encyclopædia*, 1907).

THE divine who forms the subject of this chapter, St. Alphonsus Maria De Liguori, was born at Marianella, near Naples, in 1696. In early life he practised at the Bar, and obtained considerable success as an advocate, until an unfortunate blunder in the conduct of an important feudal lawsuit between two powerful princes (he omitted to notice "a simple negative particle" in a crucial document) covered him with shame and confusion, and put an end to his legal career. The opposing counsel, instead of replying to his eloquent speech, simply pointed to the word "not," and Liguori had to admit that his argument was destroyed, and his case with it. Newman, in his usual curious fashion, claims this as an example of the saint's extraordinary truthfulness, but there was obviously no other course of action open to him. Exclaiming, "Deceitful world, I know thee: thou shalt no longer mislead me," he returned home, "shut himself up in his chamber, and shed many tears before his crucifix." Shortly afterwards he entered the Church. Here his legal training and mental tendencies greatly helped him in his casuistical researches; he remained a lawyer all his

life; in his mind the subtlety of the special pleader was wedded to that of the Jesuit *—and holy Mother Church has blessed the fruits of their union.

His private and episcopal life is stated to have been beyond reproach. Various authors describe him as affectionate, meek, gentle, and amiable; yet he approved of torturing heretics, and published elaborate rules for the guidance of the torturers.† As usually happens with Roman saints, a halo of romance, of mystery, miracle, sanctity, and mediæval asceticism, has gathered round him. His austerities were terrible. "I know for certainty," Father Dominic Corsano deposed, "that this servant of God constantly scourged himself unbloodily and bloodily, and besides the unbloody scourgings enjoined by his rule," he was wont to punish himself every morning and evening. "I know that this servant of God lacerated his body also with haircloth with sharp points in it, and with chains as well on the arms as on the legs . . . so armed with sharp points, that they filled with horror all who ever saw him." He had a dress filled with a coat-of-mail with iron points, bandages of camel's hair, and other instruments of penance. He slept for a few hours upon two planks, with a large stone hung on and tied to his feet. He never shaved himself with a razor, but did it with pincers, and his assistant friar had to make his clerical crown with the same pincers.

The miraculous powers of the saint were exemplified in a remarkable way in 1779. Vesuvius was in full eruption, Torre de Annunziata and the surrounding country were threatened with destruction, when

* He was not actually a member of the Order: he founded the Congregation of the Redemptorists.

† *Moral Theology*, iii, 202.

Alphonsus came to the rescue. He prayed and, at the instigation of the Fathers, raised his hand and blessed the mountain. Suddenly the flaming torrent of lava was diverted, and the menaced villages were saved. In his old age, we are told, Liguori was more than once raised in the air when speaking of God. On another occasion a friend, paying a morning call, was surprised to see him suspended above the ground, as though swimming in mid-air, with arms outstretched towards a picture of Jesus and Mary. The saint, annoyed at being discovered in this unconventional position, gave his visitor strict orders to say nothing about it. Liguori's health was never good; yet, despite his flagellations, his hair shirts and coat-of-mail, and other mortifications of the flesh, he lived to a ripe old age, and died on August 1, 1787.*

He was beatified in 1816, and canonized with great pomp and splendour on Trinity Sunday, 1839. The Catholic Calendar tells us with much gusto, that, in addition to about 18,000 ecclesiastics, there was a greater attendance than was ever previously witnessed. At the ceremony were present "several Kings and Queens of different States, an innumerable number of Princes, Dukes, Earls"—all the nobility and gentry, in short—to say nothing of "about 250,000 of various other classes, independently of the inhabitants of Rome and its environs." In 1871 Pius IX bestowed upon him one of the greatest distinctions that a theologian can achieve: he became one of the nineteen Doctors of the Church—the only Doctor of the last 300 years, since St. François de Sales. Previously to that, in

* See Blakeney's *St. Alphonsus Liguori*, Cardinal Wiseman's *Lives of the Saints*, etc.

May 1803, Pius VII "confirmed the decree of the Sacred Congregation of Rites, which declared that all the writings of St. Alphonsus, whether printed or inedited, had been most rigorously examined," that Liguori's moral system had been more than twenty times rigorously discussed, "and in the definite judgment of the Sacred Congregation, all agreed *voce concordi, unanimi consensu, una voce, unanimiter,*" that "*not one word* had been found *censurâ dignum* (deserving of censure)." *

Further, in 1831, the Congregation of the Holy Penitentiary promulgated a very remarkable decision. It affirmed that the material fact of an opinion being in St. Liguori's writing is ample warrant for its adoption without any need to weigh the reasons. This decision was approved by Gregory XVI; and on July 22, 1831, a Decree of the Church was issued. This Decree allows confessors to follow *any* of Liguori's opinions *without weighing any of the reasons on which they are based.* This "unprecedented honour," as the *Catholic Encyclopædia* rightly calls it, has never been bestowed, before or since, upon any son of the Church. Cardinal Wiseman, in his *Lives of the Saints,* declares that the works of St. Alphonsus "do not contain any proposition whatever which can be called pernicious, erroneous, or rash; the morals, therefore, of the saintly bishop cannot be censured without censuring the decision of the Holy See." Popes Clement XIII and XIV, Benedict XIV, Pius VII, VIII, and IX, Leo XII and XIII, and Gregory XVI, all praise the saint and his works to the skies. "You have your Liguori—consult

* *The Roman Catholic Calendar* for 1845, p. 167: see Blakeney's *St. Alphonsus Liguori.*

him," said Benedict XIV to a priest who asked for advice. There is none of the half-hearted approval of his doctrine suggested by Newman in his feeble and disingenuous defence of Liguori: every confessor who seeks for guidance in morals has recourse to the saint; and we have it, lastly, on the high authority of the *Catholic Encyclopædia* that his teaching is that of every Catholic theologian in these later days, and that he is "the Prince of Moral Theologians."

It will be seen, therefore, that we are not here dealing with the maunderings of some mediæval monk, but with a very live, authoritative teacher of up-to-date Roman doctrine. If anybody says that I am telling a thrice-told tale, that Pascal dealt with casuistry for all time in his immortal *Provincial Letters*, I can only reply that we are dealing now with a new set of circumstances. They cannot now pretend that we are unearthing forgotten paradoxes, or raking up the foolish pronouncements of obscure or discredited authors. When Pascal wrote his *Letters* he had not half so strong a case as I have to-day; and I only wish it were his hand guiding my pen at this moment. The abominable doctrines he scorched and shrivelled with his satire had not then received the formal *imprimatur* of the Church: up to Liguori's time the teaching of the casuists had more than once been indignantly repudiated by the Pope or the Hierarchy. Now those doctrines have been summarized, sifted, and as it were codified, by a man who has been pronounced by the Church in solemn conclave assembled to have said nothing that was deserving of censure, whose peculiar wisdom has been crowned by her with the highest honours in her gift, and who is, in a word, her

authorized exponent of what is right and wrong in the sphere of human conduct.

Liguori certainly deserves any repute that may be due to him for having forced the confessors into line by compelling them to grant absolution whenever there was any plausible reason for doing so; but he achieved his success at a heavy cost. He jettisoned the Church's cargo of what he called " rigorism," but which includes much that ordinary folk would regard as ordinary decency in conduct; he compromised with evil, and mainly owes his present exalted position to the charming skill he displayed in " eviscerating the substance of a rule while leaving its shadow intact." * The Catholic religion has been ruined, as a working religion, by its theology; and to the saint must be given, more than to any other man of modern times, the doubtful credit of depreciating moral values.

A complete account of his peculiar tenets would fill a large volume, but a few salient examples may be given. Romanists say that we accuse him of being a patron of lying and deceit, and profess great indignation thereat. The following excerpts show that the charge is not made wholly without reason. He tells us that equivocation and other forms of deceit, of the kind that most people would call deliberate lying,† may be practised on occasions when, in common opinion, it is wholly unpermissible. Newman in his *Apologia*

* " Casuistry," in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*

† Equivocation is, in fact, a double lie. Added to the initial falsity of the statement is the hollow pretence that it is not a deception. Rather, if you must lie, lie outright: *pecca fortiter*, as Luther said. " Trickery and fraud are equivalent to a lie," says St. Thomas Aquinas. (*Summa Theologica*, Second Part, Vol. II, Q. LXIX, Art. 2.)

drags his customary red herring across the trail of the argument by saying at great length that even Protestants admit lying to be justifiable in certain extraordinary cases. Nobody, so far as I know, denies it. The charge which Newman does not, and cannot, meet is that Liguori justifies it under circumstances which afford no sort of valid justification. A man, the saint says, may equivocate (or, as we should say, lie) and confirm the equivocation with an oath, for a just cause.* A just cause is defined as "any honest end which has for its purpose the preservation of good things for the spirit, or useful things for the body." This is sufficiently elastic, but Liguori gives an example; the good of the Church is a *justâ causâ*. Now this obviously covers a very wide field. One can conceive of innumerable contingencies in which a man might claim that he was really acting for the good of the Church by lying; and Newman's daring gloss in his *Apologia* (p. 273), where he says that *ex justâ causâ* means "in extraordinary cases," is wholly misleading. The good of the Church may crop up under all sorts of circumstances and in the most ordinary cases. Liguori himself—after telling us that swearing with equivocation, but without a just cause, is only a venial sin—says that, except in the case of judgments or contracts, "any reasonable cause may suffice," and that in some cases "the most trifling cause may excuse" (ii, 152).

Liguori can fairly claim to be supported in these views by certain infallible pronouncements of his Church. The 16th Canon of the Third Lateran Council tells us that oaths against the good of the Church

* *Moral Theology*, ii, 151.

are not to be accounted oaths, but perjuries; perjuries to promote ecclesiastical utility are not perjuries, but good and lawful oaths. Faith need not be kept with heretics. The saintly bishop says that any oath, be it *ever* so valid, can be broken or relaxed for the good of the Church—for instance, an oath not to denounce a person to the Inquisition for torture, etc. (iv, 250; iii, 192). A father must denounce his son, a wife her husband, and *vice versâ*; a *confessor* may be delegated to relax oaths, if the Church's interests demand it. Liguori goes on to tell us that " not purely mental reservation " is lawful for a just cause, even when confirmed with an oath. By this subtle law of casuistry you may tell a lie if you give some slight sign, say, a cough or a wink (which the person you are addressing may not perceive), that you are not speaking the truth. Numerous instances are given. A man may lawfully swear to a lie, while adding in a low tone the true circumstances—even though the other person may not hear this, but might by some remote possibility have heard it (iii, 168). So in my school days I have heard a small boy deny that he had got another boy's ball, adding to himself, " Over the left," which meant that he was fibbing. A man may lawfully assert before a notary that he has received money which he has not received, if he feels morally certain that he is going to get it (iii, 167).

A man swearing with the mind of swearing, but without the intention of binding himself, is not bound to observe his oath (iii, 172). The reason which Liguori gives for this atrocious opinion is that, if there is no intention of binding oneself, there is no true

oath ; and, if no oath exists, there is no obligation of fulfilling that oath ! (*Si autem nullum existit juramentum, nulla existit obligatio illud implendi.*)

'Η γλῶσσ' ὀμώμοχ', ἡ δὲ φρὴν ἀνώμοτος.

(My tongue hath sworn, but my mind is unfettered by the oath.) The famous line from Euripides * was considered very evil doctrine in Athens, and was severely attacked by Aristophanes in *The Frogs* (l. 1471) and *Thesmophoriazusæ* (l. 275). Euripides is misrepresented by his enemies ; he would have been ashamed to preach such pernicious rubbish. That was reserved for the leading moral experts in the greatest Christian Church, 2000 years later.

Yet Catholics profess to be indignant when people accuse Liguori of encouraging unveracity. They complain bitterly when it is suggested that men who belong to, and support, a Church whose " common teaching " is of this character can hardly wonder if, at any rate where religion is in question, people are less ready to accept their statements at their full face value than they would be to accept them from men professing a different creed.

In like manner a person who makes a contract, with the intention of contracting, but not of binding himself, is not bound to fulfil the contract (iii, 710). This astonishing doctrine is justified with the usual fatuous casuistry : the basis of the system is Rome's rotten doctrine that outward acts are of wholly subordinate importance, and that intention is the one thing to be regarded in estimating moral responsibility. All authors are agreed that a Pope can " with a cause "

* *Hippolytus*, 612.

alter people's wills: some divines think that a just cause is not necessary (iv, 931).

The following is especially interesting. A man who seduces a woman under a feigned promise of marriage, confirmed by an oath, need not keep his promise if he notably exceeds her in nobility or wealth, and she is aware of the fact. And please note the reason. "The reason is, because an oath does not bind except according to the intention of him who promises." (*Ratio*: *quia juramentum non obligat, nisi juxta intentionem promittentis.*) An ancient Egyptian would have blushed at such moral teaching—bad faith, perjury, snobbery, and gross rascality, if not exactly justified, at any rate excused as regards consequences, in half a dozen lines (iii, 643).

A discussion arises next as to what amount of social or pecuniary disparity justifies the *stuprator* (ravisher) in not carrying out his engagement. If he is the son of a count (*comitis*) and she is the daughter of a smith (*fabri*), obviously the gentleman is absolved. Sanchez and others think that a much smaller social disparity would be a sufficient excuse. Observe the flunkeyism displayed by these followers of a Church which claims to be in a special degree the Church of the poor.

Supposing that, under the same circumstances, the woman was ignorant of the man's superior social position. In that case, according to the saint, the aristocratic or plutocratic rake is not bound to fulfil his promise and make her his wife; and the reason given in this case is that by marrying her he would be making greater reparation than is warranted by the injury he had done her. It is quite enough if he gives

her money compensation (*ibid.*). I may be wrong, of course, but these theories * hardly seem to be in accordance with the teaching of Christ, in whose eyes all men were equal.

A man of abandoned character has confessed his crimes, but has failed to get absolution for them, which absolution he is very anxious to obtain. Liguori says that in such a case a confessor may give the man a *printed*, but not a *written*, certificate to the effect that he *has* been absolved (iii, 639).† And the wretched quibble by which our moral theologian justifies this opinion only makes the matter worse. In such a case, he says, the confessor does not tell or write any lie, but only performs a material act in giving such a certificate! Truly Pascal had reason when he observed that Moral Theology was a most admirable science—the worldling's encouragement, the solace of the poor sinner. If it be asked, "When is a sin not a sin?" we can only answer the conundrum in the words of Benedict XIV, "You have your Liguori—consult him."

Liguori, like most of the casuists, is immensely learned in all the horrible sins and aberrations of a barbarous age. The exact nature and criminality of the most disgusting vices are discussed minutely and at absurd length, the imbecile views thereon of opposing

* N.B.—*Nobiles equestris ordinis* are not to be tortured, except for grave crimes like heresy (iv, 202). Smith, Jones, or Robinson have no such privilege: if they are heretics they can, as we shall see, be racked several times (iv, 204) and very severely (*gravius torqueri*).

† For numerous other instances of the Church's strange ethical doctrines, I beg my readers to study Appendix II, wherein they will find instruction not unmingled here and there, perhaps, with entertainment.

theologians are quoted *in extenso*, and the saint finally sums up with the solemnity of a judge. In one section we find heresy—the crime of being honestly unable to share Rome's peculiar religious views—numbered with various grave offences, treason, coining, infamous theft, and—*sodomia* (iv, 238). Indeed, in various passages (iv, 236, 238, 241, 250, 948) he makes it quite clear that heresy is the worst crime of the lot. In other words, it would appear that we non-Catholics are, if we only knew it, worse than the people who are addicted to unmentionable practices. Heresy is such a *noxia pestis* that it requires very severe remedies to stamp it out.* Torture is one sovereign cure strongly recommended by Liguori, and holy Mother Church thoroughly approves. Torture, he sagaciously observes, is a help to proof (iv, 202), and the torture may be made very severe, and repeated if necessary (*ibid.*); and the saint is full of advice and instruction to judges as to their duties in this matter. He gives minute rules and regulations for torturing people afflicted with unorthodox opinions on transcendental matters, and he warns the judge that he must not shirk his duties. He must be a qualified man; but it is for the Church, not the State, to decide on his qualifications. The judge must judge according to the laws—except when the interest of the Church requires him to depart from them. He must know his business (iv, 195: we can guess the sort of knowledge which

* Protestantism was described as a *pestis* in the original draft of the Vatican Decrees, but the enlightened Bishop Strossmayer objected, and an uproarious discussion followed. Benedict XV denounced English and American Protestants in Rome as " emissaries of Satan " who " erect pestilential cathedrals." (See the *Times*, November 24, 1915.)

Rome would require), and if he persists in retaining his office without the necessary knowledge he will not be absolved (*ibid.* Note: it is the Church, not the secular power, who is to punish him). It is well to have an accuser, as a rule, but in the crimes of heresy or treason he can be dispensed with (iv, 199), and the criminal may be condemned in his absence. Proof of the crime is also desirable, but "a half full proof" (*semi-plena probatio*) "which renders the crime more than probable," is good enough when a heretic is to be tortured (iv, 199, 200)! "When there is a notoriety of the crime" the judiciary order need not be observed: the Church, in short, is to dictate to the judiciary.

All this sounds rather odd doctrine in the twentieth century, but the Church has confirmed it with her approbation, and we now know that it is only the common teaching of Catholic theologians in these times, so I suppose there is no more to be said. For further information I refer my readers to Appendix II. Friends of mine, to whom I have shown portions of Liguori's writings, appear to be less impressed with their filth, obscenity,* and immorality than with their transcendent silliness. There is something to be said for this point of view, and Catholics tell us, as they told Mr. Gladstone, that their practice is not in conformity with their theory. This statement is open to criticism, as the two preceding chapters show; and

* The Holy Penitentiary, quoted in one of those lengthy and fatuous disquisitions—which occupy so much of the Roman ecclesiastics' time and attention—upon some utterly disgusting subject, pays a well-deserved compliment to the Saint's proficiency in filthy lore, to which I alluded just now. It describes him as *vir doctus et harum rerum peritissimus* (a learned man and highly experienced in these matters!). (Gury's *Compendium*, ii, 406.)

why, in any case, entertain such atrocious theories, and disseminate them abroad? What valid reason can be assigned for revering, for making our moral and spiritual guide, a Church which thus lowers right conduct in human estimation? The fact that her advice is not universally followed cannot absolve her from the responsibility which attaches to men or institutions who sanction poisonous doctrine. Catholics are quite well aware of this, and are naturally rather touchy on the subject of casuistry. Newman's lame defence of Liguori in his *Apologia* shows the true state of the case, and tells us quite plainly what educated Romanists really think about the saint.* He puts up the best justification he can, splits hairs with his customary skill, and displays no lack of his marvellous ingenuity in evading main issues; but his note of approbation is low and timid, his esteem obviously qualified. While uttering a pious hope that the saint will intercede for him in heaven, he makes it fairly plain that, not having been reared in a Roman seminary, he is not a very fervent admirer of the *Theologia Moralis*. Rome, on the other hand, is enchanted with the great work. Priests, we are told, make it their *vade mecum* in confession, their indissoluble companion throughout life; and every year, on August 2, good Catholics devoutly pray † that they may be taught by Liguori's

* The *Tablet* in 1918 introduced my name, with sarcastic comment, into an article on toleration, and I sent a short letter in reply. The Editor refused to publish it because I introduced the name of the Saint, and quoted from his works. He was afraid it might lead to a discussion on casuistry, which he deprecated. It is unnecessary to point out that such a discussion could not redound to the credit of the Church.

† The *Roman Missal* (strongly recommended to souls that are sick by Cardinal Mercier), Mechlin, p. 402; see *St. Alphonsus Liguori*, by R. P. Blakeney, p. 63.

rather full-flavoured admonitions, and strengthened by the example of this "new offspring" wherewith God has enriched His Church. Thus spiritually fortified and confirmed in a life of virtue (of the peculiar brand, I presume, favoured by the saint) they seek, under his able guidance, finally to attain the celestial halls of bliss.

Let us sum the matter up very briefly. Rome is now committed outright to its approval of the casuists' moral teaching, which is, after all, merely the legitimate offspring of the Church's earlier principles and doctrine. The canonization of Liguori in 1839, the bestowal of extraordinary honours upon him in 1831 and 1871, were an insolent defiance by the Curia of the sentiments and the protests uttered by the civilized world, from Pascal onwards. The seal of Rome's authority has thus been set on some of the most fatuous and loathsome ebullitions of Escobar, Sanchez, Diana, and other experts of the contemptible casuist crew. To the unbeliever these doctrines do not appear to bear the impress of divine sanction or inspiration, but an absolutist and, at any rate, partially infallible Church has now given them her final blessing. The *Catholic Encyclopædia* does not, so far as I am aware, make any claim to celestial enlightenment; but the joint Decree, in 1831, of the Church and the Pope was presumably inspired by the Holy Ghost; so we non-Catholics are left in somewhat of a quandary about the whole matter. All we know is that Rome's saintly Doctor and moral theologian, and his fellow-labourers in the field of scientific tergiversation, furnish Catholics with a thousand excuses for prevarication whenever prudence or the interests of Mother Church appear to

demand it: they also afford frail humanity abundant opportunities of "sinning conscientiously." The Holy See knew perfectly well what it was about when it accepted Liguori as its authorized exponent of what is permissible, or unpermissible, in human conduct. The Church must now abide the consequences of that acceptance. Let me end by saying that not all casuistry is of necessity bad, and that I do not use the word by itself as a term of reproach. There have been noble casuists as well as base ones; in the complicated world we inhabit all men are compelled to be casuists on occasion. What we say is that much Roman casuistry, late as well as early, is not only bad, but utterly contemptible.

CHAPTER XVI

CONCLUSION

> " Let us then conjure, by the bowels of Jesus Christ, those who cavil at the numbers of our authors, not to censure works which the eternal election of the Almighty and the blood of Jesus Christ has procured to be written for them " (Pascal's *Eighth Provincial Letter*, p. 135).

IT greatly scandalized Pascal's Jesuit Father to think that impious men should dare to critize those noble casuists who had removed the needless load from many an uneasy conscience, and made the rugged roads to Heaven easy and safe. Think how happy a Jesuit moralist made that man whose case was recorded by the Father Provincial of the Order, " the revered Père Cellot " ! He was taking a large sum of money for restitution, by his confessor's order, but looked in at a bookseller's shop on the way. Turning over the leaves of a work on Moral Theology, he lighted upon his own identical case, and found that the ethics of casuistry relieved him of the obligation to make restitution. " Upon which, being relieved of the burden of his scruples, but retaining that of his money, he returned with a light heart to his home (*abjectâ scrupuli* * *sarcinâ, retento auri pondere, levior domum repetiit*)."

It will be seen, therefore, that " moral heteronomy,"

* St Alphonsus Liguori tells us that scrupulosity is, for those engaged in secular matters, the mark of a good and timid conscience : in a prelate or a confessor it is the sign of a confused and irresolute mind (*mentis confusæ, et irresolutæ* : *Moral Theology*, vi, 644).

or the Roman system of placing your conscience in another man's keeping, may afford a convenient means of shirking your obligations to duty and justice; but, in Catholic eyes, it is a profanation of sacred mysteries to draw attention to these things. If it was wrong, as Pascal's Jesuit and Liguori thought, to rail at the doctrines which Clement XIV stigmatized as scandalous and immoral, what a crime it must be to criticize the great Liguori himself, fortified as he is by the sanction, the encomiums, and the distinctions so liberally bestowed upon him by the Church? I must repeat once more that Rome's attitude towards ethical obligation was never so clearly focused as it is to-day. In Pascal's time there was a vast conglomeration of casuistical writings—a mass of confused, and sometimes contradictory, theories—none of them possessing any greater authority than that which the prestige of the writer, or an occasional episcopal commendation, conferred upon them. Now, thanks to Liguori and his successors, we have a compact body of casuistical morality framed into a sort of code, which is admitted to be the official morality of the Church; and we know that, owing to this clerical sanction of laxity in conduct, it is quite easy for any person of moderate ingenuity to set up a justificatory plea for innumerable breaches of the Ten Commandments. To be able to sin with a clear conscience, to indulge the lusts of the flesh in this world, and at the same time to escape the dreaded consequences in the next, is a boon for which average humanity may well be grateful. Nor must we make the mistake of supposing that these curious theories, with all their implications, are in any way inconsistent with the fundamental principles of the

Papacy. Jesuitism, as a matter of fact, with its twin brother and faithful ally, casuistry, is simply the natural and logical development of the later system, founded by Gregory the Great (A.D. 590) and Hildebrand (Gregory VII, 1073), whereby the fabric of Rome's empire over men's souls and bodies was finally fashioned and cemented.

Let us briefly summarize the main heads of the indictment which thinking men have framed against the Church, and which causes them to regard her unfavourably. The chief points in order of importance, as they appear to me, are the following: (1) first and foremost, in my opinion, is the spirit of falsity, of evasion, and tampering with the truth; what, in short, Carlyle calls "the Jesuit *Soul* nestling itself in the life of mankind everywhere." This inherent and seemingly incurable crookedness is a very large subject, and the fact that it is only lightly touched upon in this volume must not be taken as an indication that the writer regards it otherwise than as a very serious matter. (2) Obscurantism; keeping a man ignorant to serve the Church's ends, crippling him, paralysing his will, and stunting the faculties with which he has been endowed. Some people think, and there is much to be said for their view, that obscurantism should be given the premier place in the catalogue of evil; but to my mind that "all-permeating mendacity" which Tyrrell deplored, and about which there is such a remarkable consensus of impartial opinion, is the most terrible and soul-destroying feature of Roman priestcraft. (3) Mischief-making in private, public, and international affairs. (4) The tremendous powers and responsibilities entrusted to the priesthood. (5) The teaching of

immoral doctrine under the official sanction of the Church.

To these must be added (6) cruelty and callousness, the cruelty being of a peculiarly odious kind—cruelty in the name of Christ; (7) celibacy and other unnatural forms of repression, such as the monastic or conventual system by which boys and girls are persuaded to incur responsibilities, and enter artificially forced vocations, the nature and extent of which they are too young to understand or appreciate; (8) gross and, in some cases, degrading superstition; (9) the confessional, and the abuses which inevitably attach themselves to it; (10) sensuality masquerading as mystical religion; (11) a spirit of narrowness and pettiness, of "inconceivable littleness," viciousness, envy and spite, suspicion, tale-bearing, calumny, eavesdropping, treachery, mean bullying and persecution *—spies everywhere, ears at all keyholes, vigilance committees in the dioceses watching and reporting on unfortunate priests and bishops and laymen; (12) the running of religion as a trade, or for personal and political ends. Earnest Catholics mention other evil spirits which assail the Church's life—such as the spirit of avarice and of immobility; but these do not appear to me to be specially characteristic.

Most intelligent Romanists admit the existence of these and similar abuses, but the Church, so far, gives

* For the manifestations of these unpleasant qualities, see Tyrrell's *Mediævalism*, and his Letter to Father Martin in his *Autobiography*; Mooney's *Monastic Politics and Roman Procedure*; Michelet's works; Conybeare's *Roman Catholicism in European Politics*; The Montagnini revelations in Appendix I; McCabe's *Twelve Years in a Monastery*; Lilley's *Modernism*, and *What We Want*; "Pat's" works; Fawkes's *Studies in Modernism*; Lytton Strachey's *Eminent Victorians*; and other books and pamphlets.

no token of repentance. The war gave her a chance of rehabilitating herself in the world's eyes, but she flung it away. Signs of genuine improvement are still sadly to seek. The Roman malaria hangs thickly now, as in Newman's day, about the base of Peter's rock. The atmosphere remains tainted—what the French call *faisandée*—with intrigue, suspicion, jealousy, and backstairs cabal. Whenever some protagonist of theology, or ecclesiastic who has otherwise made himself prominent, dies in Rome there are whispers and headshakings, dark hints of poison, and the like. The rumours may be, generally are, unfounded; but such rumours only flourish where the moral and spiritual conditions are such as to make these things credible or even possible. The hatred of the Vatican, felt by so large a part of the Italian population, is not wholly without foundation.

Tyrrell found that the effort to accommodate himself to Rome had been to him a source of mental unfruitfulness and moral cowardice and spiritual sterility. "It is the best in me that kicks against it," he said; and many good and sincere Catholics are becoming inspired with similar feelings towards their Church as an institution: they recognize that a time comes when submission to clerical pretension and arrogance becomes no longer possible, a treason to one's better self. Nevertheless, while they admit the gravity of the evils, they do not always see their way to effectual action; if you suggest that there is a work of demolition, as well as of reconstruction, awaiting their hands, they are doubtful. But that at least partial demolition is a necessary prelude to restoration appears clear. The Papacy may be likened to some ancient

decaying mansion where the timbers have all rotted, the walls are mildewed, and the drains are all wrong. Its " septic tendencies " (as a bishop admirably phrases it) are only too painfully apparent. " I feel as though I had been sitting on a manure-heap," said a " pervert " from Catholicism who, most unwillingly, and after many searchings of heart, was last year finally convinced by the stern logic of facts—which only those who are wilfully blind can fail to recognize. Clericalism has been tried in the fire, and has been found wanting.

The words " clericalism " and " priestcraft " have been frequently used in the preceding chapters, and it may be well, even at this late stage of our inquiry, to state roughly what we mean by them. If Gambetta was right, and clericalism is the enemy that has to be fought, let us be sure that we are not fighting a shadow ; and, when we have satisfied ourselves on this point, let us try and find out exactly what it is that we are fighting. Clericalism is the besetting vice of clerics, just as " churchiness " is the pet foible of churchmen. It seeks to identify the Church with the priesthood, aims at the suppression of the laity, the tyranny of a sacerdotal caste, and the enthronement of the absolutist idea in spiritual affairs. Its present-day manifestations are the deification of the Papacy and the Roman episcopate, and the enslavement of the human mind and soul and will to extraneous and highly doubtful authority ; the undue magnifying of the priestly office and function, and the frequent employment of fraud and other unworthy means for the attainment of spiritual power and temporal ends. Inferior men are invested with absurdly great influence

and privilege which they are manifestly unfitted to exercise, and which they persistently abuse. The inevitable results are the secularization, and consequent degradation, of religion ; the exploitation, from worldly motives, of things which men have always been taught to regard as sacred ; the formation out of the Christian faith—which is supposed to be, but now in large measure is not, the faith established by Christ—of a political organization with purely mundane aims ; the professionalism of religion—the cleric is apt to regard himself as an expert in transcendental matters, the layman as a mere amateur—and the thaumaturgist poses of those who profess it ; the excessive exaltation of its formal and dogmatic side ; the preferment of theology and pure transcendentalism, and the whittling away of the claims of duty and conscience ; the preaching—but not always the practice—of contempt for this world in the supposed interests of the next. To these must be added the endless turbulence, the exclusiveness and separatist bias of clericalism, which seeks to monopolize Christ and regards men who belong to other sects as pariahs ; its terrible speciousness and unveracity, its bribes to lax conduct and indolence. Gambetta's views on clericalism were not original ; Christ gave forcible expression to them 1850 years earlier.

There are doubtless other aspects of the evil which do not occur to me at the moment ; but the above features are those which have always attached themselves in a greater or less degree to priestly castes of every age and clime since the world began. Policy, masked as spiritual necessity, is always the guiding principle ; and it is policy which now, as ever, is the

mainspring of the Papacy's action. Autocracy is its ideal: on the other hand, if autocratic theories are under a cloud, they can be temporarily abandoned in favour of more popular ones. The chief remaining representative of authority in high places, the Church, can yet dally with treason, encourage sedition, or coquet with revolution. The Holy See, having backed the German favourite Absolutism, and lost, is now trying to retrieve its position by plunging heavily on the outsider, Democracy. Having come to terms—the sinner's terms—with sin, it is essaying to make terms with the prevailing temper of the day. The new clerical-popular party in Italy, the various pseudo-democratic pronouncements of the Pope and the Hierarchy, the alliance of the Irish Church with Sinn Fein and the Transport Union, the appearance of the Quebec Church as a mediator in industrial disputes, show which way the wind is blowing. That the Churches have steadily opposed social reform in the past is now acknowledged, so we need not labour the point. Protestantism fully admits the charge,* and is repenting in sackcloth and ashes: Rome alone remains wholly impenitent at heart. The history of the Papacy forbids us to believe in the genuineness of its recent professed conversion; and it still shows not the smallest abatement of its autocratic ways and dogmatic pretensions. There have often been times when Mother Church has assumed a cheerful countenance and talked about improving the world and bettering the condition

* See the Report of the English Church's Committee of Inquiry on "Christianity and Industrial Problems"; also Bishop Gore's pamphlet on *The League of Nations and the Opportunity of the Church.*

of the suffering poor: as we know, she always has on hand an assorted stock of opinions suited to all tastes. Now and again there is a rattling of the dry bones; the Vatican suspends its mediæval speculations, concentrates its mind on the more congenial task of political intrigue, and discusses economic and social questions. A Pope will issue a platitudinous Encyclical breathing a spirit of the purest altruism and hope for the oppressed: a cardinal will follow suit with an (outwardly) incendiary Lenten Pastoral appealing to the reforming mind; and priestly pamphlets rain down in showers. The argument is always the same. The golden Middle Age was the age of the Church's guilds—those wonderful guilds which are always being held up to our admiration.* All the trouble has arisen because a faithless world rejected the sway of a kindly and infallible theocracy, and now shows in the world of thought, as well as in politics, a pig-headed preference for rulers of its own election. "Only listen to us," ecclesiastics say, "and all will be well." The Roman clergy, we are assured, will henceforth cease to incur the reproach of being mere *hommes de sacristie*: they will come out of the land of dreams and mingle with their fellow-creatures in the workaday world. We have heard it all often before; but the fit seldom lasts long, the reforming spirit passes with the occasion which caused its display, and things go on in their customary fashion. Tyrrell, as usual, puts it most tersely and forcibly. "The Churches chatter progress, and the secular and clerical arm are linked together in the interests of a sanctified worldliness."

* For an account of these guilds, diametrically opposed to the Church's view, see *The Church and the People*, by J. McCabe, p. 42.

What will be the outcome of the present chaos in which religious thought now finds itself involved no man can foresee, but we may allow ourselves the luxury of making a few guesses. That the Papacy can continue to exist under the conditions which have prevailed of recent years, and still to a great extent prevail, is unthinkable. To begin with, the world cannot tolerate indefinitely a system which is for ever, and everywhere, making trouble and obstructing that spirit of harmony and unification which all that is best in human nature is striving to create. The uncontrolled rule of a Spaniardized theocracy composed mainly of Jesuit and Ultramontane reactionaries, Austro-Italian mediævalists—with all the disreputable elements which inevitably attach themselves to corrupt and effete institutions, must give place to something more consonant with modern ideas and tendencies. Otherwise a time might conceivably come when some future Pius X would have the bulk of his educated ministers and honest adherents under sentence of excommunication. Tyrrell says * that it is possible for "a moderately honest man" to subscribe to the Vatican Decrees of 1870 without denying his Catholicism. What I should like to know is, whether it is possible for a moderately honest and educated man to subscribe to the *Pascendi* Encyclical? If he is unable to do so, how does he find himself able to remain a member of a Church which, by its infallible ordinances, imposes on the faithful obedience in matters of dogma? It is possible that some future day may see an infiltration of English and American blood into the Curia, which would bring

* *Mediævalism*, p. 87.

about a more rational procedure in that truly remarkable institution.*

On the other hand, *can* the Papacy reform itself? If it reforms, and abandons its strange claims, its miraculous sacraments, and its infallible dogmas, and opens its doors to liberal ideas, strange things may happen. But is such a consummation in any degree probable? It is just conceivable that a *modus vivendi* may be found between Ultramontane Vaticanism and reasonable Catholic opinion; a renovated Church may arise and preserve what is fundamentally good in Catholicism, purge her organization of its grosser abuses and its more absurd pretensions, and recognize finally that her business is not with politics or pig-killing, or other secular avocations, but with the preaching of Christ's gospel on earth. Tyrrell's dream † may be realized, at least in part; a sufficiently large body of educated Catholic opinion may recognize the essential fraud of the Papal claim to spiritual and temporal dominion; the "invisible Church" may at last be made visible, and we may see a Catholicism without the Papacy. But that day is not yet. The Papal motto now is, *aut Cæsar aut nullus*: autocracy must be all or nothing. It knows very well that for it no half measures are possible; the Curia must be a "whole-hogger" in both doctrine and authority. If you subtract one item of mediæval dogma, take one brick out of the absolutist edifice, diminish or enlarge its framework in the smallest degree, the whole thing may crumble away. The accommodating spirit of

* I heard a lady the other day describe it unwittingly as "the Curio."

† See p. 16.

liberal Protestantism is not for the Holy See.* The old theological guard will die, but will not surrender. In my opinion, and in the opinion of much wiser men than myself, mediævalism and modern thought cannot co-exist in intellectual and spiritual matters. In the end one or the other has got to go.

"My brethren, the Protestant nations are sick," said Cardinal Mercier in his attack on the clerical reformers. Well, we have been sick—or rather we have lately been severely wounded by absolutist weapons, and for some of our wounds we have Rome to thank. But we are better now, and we hope soon to be nearing convalescence. Romanism, on the other hand, is stricken with a mortal disease—acute septic poisoning acting on a body already enfeebled by senile decay. The Church will die hard, but her vital forces are steadily ebbing. The new remedy—doses of democratic tonic—cannot permanently invigorate old bones and perishing arteries. Still, she will fight to the last: there is no reason to suppose that the Holy See contemplates suicide by acquiescence in Modernist ideas.

But, though this is true of the Church in its present form, it may safely be predicted that Catholicism, in one shape or another, has many years of life before it. I ventured the other day to ask a friend of mine why he remained a Catholic. "There's nothing else to be," he replied. I have since learned † that a similar query, put by Leo XIII to a free-thinking professor, received

* Somebody proposed the other day a Pan-Christian conference of all the Churches, but we were sharply reminded by Rome that it is essentially a dogmatic Church, and therefore cannot meet other Churches on terms of equality.

† *Studies in Modernism*, p. 106.

an almost identical answer. That the Church still possesses a peculiar fascination for certain minds—or perhaps I should say, temperaments—it would be idle to deny. People with what are called "artistic" tendencies, and they appear to be growing in number, are repelled by what they regard as the chilliness and austerity of Protestantism. Catholicism is superficially and dramatically seductive: it is "warm"—rather too warm, perhaps, in some of its aspects—and the æsthetic emotion which is said to be the basis of art finds gratification in its gorgeous, if somewhat theatrical, pomp and display. Even our old British Puritanism is now showing signs of succumbing to its fascinations. Nonconformist ministers are making use of its sensuous appeals, and adopting portions of its ritual and forms. Dissent is abandoning what Matthew Arnold called its "hideousness and immense ennui, its stunted sense of beauty and low standard of manners"; it has learned to appreciate the value and the attractive force of externals, and no longer affects to despise the upholstery of religion. Some fifteen years ago a sort of Ritualistic school of Nonconformity sprang up. Since then the process has made further progress; but the fount of inspiration now appears to be Rome rather than Canterbury.

Whether Rome is gaining or losing ground in England at the present moment is a moot point. Its attitude during the war has disgusted thinking people, but we hear now and again of "distinguished converts" from the cultured or æsthetic ranks of Society. On the other hand, there is a continual leakage, both from above and below, especially among the more intelligent working classes. There are no very reliable statistics

on the subject, but the seceders probably overpass the new recruits in quality, if not in number.

In conclusion, let me repeat now what was said in the opening pages of this book. If anything it contains grates on sensitive ears, I regret it; but the nature of the subject compels plain speaking. The Church has sinned grievously against us, and we cannot be blamed for making our protest; but neither, on the other hand, can justice be deaf to the plea, forcibly urged by many Romanists, that thousands of good Catholics have preferred their country to the supposed interests of the Papacy. During the Boer War, and also in the late struggle, the clerical Press on the Continent, in Ireland, Canada, Australia, and other countries launched their diatribes against England, but without shaking the loyalty of patriotic Catholics of the Empire. We acknowledge to the full, and with the profoundest gratitude, our debt to those gallant sons of the Church who, headed by their great French general, have fought and bled for the cause; and it is a comfort to know that many Catholics share our feelings of disgust at the conduct of those leaders and ministers of religion who, out of their spiritual armoury, have furnished treason with its most effective weapons of offence.

In the non-combatant ranks many an unknown *curé*—some clerical "village Hampden," with his back to the wall against tyranny, and shepherding his flock to the last—has paid with his life the penalty of his devotion to duty. Many a gallant *padre*, ministering to the wounded in the trenches, has gone the same road. Their self-sacrifice, not greater than, but equal to, the sacrifices of our heroes in the field, will be remembered as part of the world's obligations to the

defenders of civilization and humanity. All honour, too, to individual priests and nuns, men and women of humble aspect, but cast in heroic mould, who spend selfless lives of unrewarded work, dispensing charity and visiting the sick, amongst the poor: we all know that the Church has produced, amid a vast mass of undistinguished sinners, some truly remarkable saints. "Such Noblenesses, purchased by the world's best heart's-blood, must not be lost; we cannot afford to lose them, in what confusions soever." Whatever form religious belief may take in the world that is to be, there will always be room for ministrations such as theirs. In the new order that is surely coming the services of these noble men and women will still be available—with fuller minds and more developed capacities, let us hope, and over a wider field—for the world's betterment. The pity now is that their sphere of usefulness is limited by the cramped vision and narrow range of the system which they serve with such blind devotion. Moreover, as a remedy for the deeper ills of life their meritorious efforts can be regarded as, at best, mere palliatives—plasters on a body suffering from organic disease. To-day the peoples of the earth do not ask for charity; they ask for justice, for freedom, for licence to make the best of themselves and of their life.

I shall be met, no doubt, with the familiar taunt that my criticism is merely destructive. The answer to this objection is that there are many evils which can be cured, most simply and effectively, by destroying or removing the mischief which causes them. If a good road is blocked, no constructive work is needed; all we have to do is to clear away the obstruction. If

a man is choking me, the only remedy I require is that he shall take his fingers off my throat: nature will do the rest. My Catholic critics complain that, though I would gladly destroy the Vatican, I have nothing to put in its place. I admit the impeachment to this extent: I would gladly free the world from Curialism, just as I would gladly free it from influenza. Mr. Alfred Fawkes, in his graphic portrayal of the evils of the Roman system, calls it "the leprosy of Catholicism"; and a man afflicted with leprosy, or any other disease, has only one desire—to get rid of it as soon as possible. He does not want to put anything in its place.

Half the trouble in the world arises in these days from people not thinking. Some of them are not to blame for this, because they are forbidden to think otherwise than in terms set and regulated by a mediæval oracle. Moreover, the Church, both historically and from interested motives, is still an essentially Quietist organization, and lulls her votaries to sleep. Our business, in opposition to hers, is to arouse these spiritual lotus-eaters from their languid dream, and teach them to prefer action and intellectual freedom to a blindly submissive passivity. We must remove the veto on their thinking, encourage and fortify their thought, and urge them in every way to seek their own salvation. All this is part and parcel of the creative task that lies before us. Never before in the world's history was so much construction required as to-day, but a work of demolition is also imperative: there are piles of ruin and *débris* to be shovelled away. The latter may be a humbler task than the rebuilding, but it is equally necessary; and it is to this essential preliminary that I am for the present confining myself.

APPENDIX I

"A PAUL PRY OF THE VATICAN"

No better or more illustrative example of the subterranean workings of the Roman clerico-political system can be given than the remarkable Montagnini Papers seized by the French Government in 1907. The following brief notes are mainly based on an admirable article, under the above heading, which appeared in the *Nation* of April 13, 1907 (see also the issues of April 27 and May 4). Monsignor Montagnini was an unofficial agent of the Vatican who remained in Paris after the rupture between Church and State in France, which resulted in the expulsion of the religious Orders and the Separation Law of 1905. His business was to furnish the Papal Secretary, that typical Vatican ecclesiastic, Cardinal Merry del Val, with information as to what was passing in France. A large part of his functions consisted of keeping an eye on the French bishops and priests, and secretly denouncing any of them who showed signs of harbouring liberal views. One archbishop was falsely accused of betraying secrets, another prelate of discourtesy. The envoy also provided his employer with all the gossip and tittle-tattle of the lobbies, and spied and informed against all and sundry; he found out what Ministers had their price, and the alleged sums required to buy them; gave mendacious accounts of interviews with distinguished

personages (including M. Clemenceau) who indignantly repudiated the statements attributed to them.

At the other end of the wire was the Cardinal Secretary—the authorized representative of the world's arbiter in moral matters, the man appointed by Heaven to tell us how we should behave. Did he disapprove of his faithful agent's goings on? Far from it. He commends his "intelligent zeal," eagerly drinks in his information, says he is making good use of it, and asks for more. He also gives him some sound and eminently characteristic ecclesiastical advice: "Talk little, repeat everything, listen well." The world was again afforded the too familiar spectacle of clerical eavesdropping, spying, lying, slandering, meddling, plotting, and corruption.

After a while the usual thing happened. The Monsignor was voted by the French to be a public nuisance, a sedition-monger, a menace to the Government and the Republic. "He was deported as an undesirable alien, habitually inciting French citizens to resistance to the law." His papers were confiscated, and their contents by some means found their way into the Press. "The impression left," says the *Nation*, "is one of inconceivable littleness. Religion is conspicuously absent; the letters suggest the shabby society journalist rather than a diplomatist or priest. The Papal Envoy peeps and prys; he delates and gossips; he plays the part of a common informer; he has a finger—and a very clumsy finger—in every pie. His moral standard is below that of the average jockey. He and his employers see nothing discreditable in buying politicians in the open market; and, though they haggle over his price, they are

fatuous enough to believe that M. Clemenceau can be bought."

Rome's splendid mendacity was further exemplified. "Not one word that these men say can be believed. Solemnly, repeatedly, they assured us that the Pope's action in the matter of the Separation Law was taken on the all but unanimous advice of the French bishops. It was not so; and the highly placed ecclesiastics with whom the statement originated knew that what they were stating was not true." It was not Monsignor Montagnini who cut the most contemptible figure in this thoroughly disreputable business, in which politics, backstairs intrigue, calumny, and corruption were mingled in characteristic fashion. Once more, and by no means for the first or last time, the Church touched the depths of ignominy.

The article in the *Nation* was followed by a somewhat heated correspondence, but the main facts were not seriously challenged—for the simple reason that they were incontrovertible. It is evident, therefore, that a diplomatic representative of the Papacy, especially one covered by diplomatic privilege, is apt to prove a questionable boon to the country where he is permitted to take up his residence. In the Montagnini case we have the Roman method, as it affects public and domestic life, in a nutshell. Therein lies the importance of these revelations. Let me conclude by pointing out that, far from being rebuked, the Nuncio and his substitute were, as Tyrrell informs us, subsequently honoured and promoted. British statesmen, therefore, cannot plead ignorance as to the nature of the services which the Vatican requires of its agents abroad.

APPENDIX II

"THE COMMON TEACHING" OF ROME

FOR the benefit of people who would like to know what is "the common teaching of Catholic theologians" in these later days, I append a few additional samples. My hands are necessarily tied in the matter: the citations are very incomplete, because the bulk of the most offensive passages in Liguori's loathsome treatise are quite unprintable. It will be remembered that the Holy Penitentiary describes the saint as *vir doctus et harum rerum peritissimus*—a learned man and a consummate expert in various matters about which most people would prefer to remain uninformed, so his authority cannot be questioned. I will begin with some gems of Roman doctrine as regards honesty of word and deed:

A wife may lawfully deprive her husband of a heretical book, lest he should read it.*

The 37th Proposition of Innocent XI said that domestic servants can steal from their masters, if they think they are not sufficiently well paid. This proposition appears to have been condemned by some profane person; but certain learned authors think that it is all right, if there is a confessor at hand to tell the servant how much he may steal! The confessor, however, must be a moderately learned man

* *Moral Theology*, iii, 519.

(*mediocriter doctus*: iii, 524). Liguori's final decision is that a prudent servant can, *according to his own judgment*, so compensate himself for his ill-remunerated labour (iii, 524).

A man may steal a moderate amount from a rich person, without sinning grievously, and the saint kindly provides a scale of amounts that may be so stolen, and the sort of incomes that may be drawn upon (iii, 526 *sq.*). Gury and others follow this teaching, which is still in vogue. For instance, a critic of a recent book complained the other day * that the author fixed "the absolute sum in theft" too high. I repeat, once more, that Liguori's doctrines are those of the Church to-day.

A son may, in like manner, steal 20 or 30 *aurei* from a father with 1500 a year, if the son is grown up, and "the father be not tenacious" (*si pater non sit tenax*). One author thinks that the theft of fifty *aurei* is required to constitute a grievous sin (iii, 543).

A man may steal if he is in great want. A nobleman (*vir honoratus*) who dislikes begging, and strongly objects to work, can also help himself to other people's property (iii, 520). Gury, in like manner, says that a nobleman debtor who cannot pay up without depriving himself of servants, horses, and arms may postpone restitution. Another instance of the strong caste-instinct inherent in Roman teaching.

A creditor can also "compensate" himself, without recourse to legal proceedings, if he is afraid of incurring the costs and the ill-will caused by a lawsuit (iii, 521).

Titius promises marriage with an oath (Catholic courtship appears to be accompanied by a great deal

* *Tablet*, June 14, 1919.

of swearing; but, as adequate provision is made for evading the oaths, this is of slight consequence) to "Bertha, who is rich, healthful, a virgin of good report," etc. If, however, poor Bertha loses her money (*incidit in paupertatem*) Liguori absolves the faithless Titius from his oath-confirmed vows (iii, 180). Also, if Titius changes his mind, and determines to become a monk, he need not keep his promise. Catholic ladies, please take notice! When a gentleman offers you his heart and hand, he does so with "this tacit condition, unless I enter a religious order" (iii, 177).

On the other hand, a promise to be true to a harlot is binding, "because, according to the general rule, an oath ought always to be fulfilled" (iii, 184)—except of course, when Mother Church says it need not.

An oath to keep a secret is limited by the condition, secretly understood (secret reservations, as we know, may absolve the swearer), "if it does not injure me" (iii, 183). "He who hath sworn to a judge that he would speak what he knew, is not bound to reveal concealed things. The reason is manifest" (*ibid.*).

A witness may lie or equivocate when he is not properly interrogated, or when he thinks that the crime with which the prisoner is charged is not blameworthy! (iii, 154).

When a man asks you for money you may conceal the truth by saying, "Oh, that I had it!" (iii, 160).

An oath (or a contract) does not bind, except according to the intention of him who makes the promise (iii, 172, 643; and see p. 214 of this book).

An adulteress can deny her adultery to her husband,

and assert equivocally with an oath that she "did not break the bond of matrimony, which truly remains"! Also, if she has been sacramentally confessed, the lady can affirm her innocence, because her crime was taken away by confession (iii, 159-162).

A man who has promised marriage, but is not thereby bound to marriage, "can deny the promise, that is to say, so as to be bound by it." "He that is asked by a judge, whether he may have spoken with the accused, can deny it, understanding that he did not so speak to him, as to co-operate in the crime." A poor man, absconding with goods for his own support, can answer the judge that he has nothing (iii, 158). There are dozens of similar examples given by Liguori and other theologians.

You may induce a man to commit a lesser evil to prevent him from committing a greater (e.g. fornication for adultery, maiming instead of murder, ii, 57). St. Augustine is quoted as approving this, not only as regards persons permitting, but even persuading; and priests, confessors, and parents are enjoined to act on these principles.

It is lawful for masters, parents, and husbands to afford an occasion for sin—for a master to permit a thief to steal or a husband to lay a snare for his wife by furnishing her and her paramour with opportunities (ii, 58).

Liguori's approval of persecution, and his instructions to torturers, have been alluded to already. He publishes, as an Appendix to his works, the Epitome of Benedict XIV which deals with persecution. In this Epitome,* approved by Liguori and the Church,

* See Blakeney's *Liguori*, p. 362.

the scholar-Pope tells his bishops that they must sedulously purge their dioceses of heretics, punish them, and take care not to impede the Inquisitors in the performance of their duties. As authorities, he quotes atrocious Canons and Encyclicals enjoining the strongest measures, including torture, against the heretical pestilence; and their contents are approved. Heretics taking sanctuary in a Church are to be dragged out of it to their doom. Those Catholics who say that Rome does not still approve of suppressing heresy with strong measures, including torture, can hardly be acquainted with the facts. Heretics in danger of being tortured for their unbelief, must remember that a half-full proof (*semi-plena probatio*) suffices to secure their conviction.

Liguori's disquisitions on what passes in the confessional, and the precautions necessary to mitigate its obvious abuses, are as lengthy as they are unedifying, and a large part of them are quite unfit for publication, even when "veiled in the obscurity of a learned language." They at least prove that the stories one hears are not devoid of foundation.

The seal of secrecy in the confessional must not be broken, even when the safety of a whole nation is at stake (vi. 34). The Jesuit Garnet, for instance, admitted that the Gunpowder Plot was revealed to him beforehand; but his religion forbade him to avert it by warning the authorities; it seems no less clear that priests are often cognizant of murders, planned or committed, in Ireland.

In no case is it lawful to use knowledge received in confessions alone, if there be danger of disclosure. If a priest knows that a treacherous murder is about to

be committed, he must not warn the intended victims (vi, 655).

On the other hand, "it appears more probable" that the priest may use such knowledge in order to save his own precious skin—if, for instance, he learns that somebody is trying to poison him, or is lying in wait to murder him in a wood (*ibid.*). Rome is never above turning disclosures of all kinds to its own material advantage.

Unless Liguori grossly exaggerates, the amount of flirting and actual solicitation that goes on in the confessional is quite remarkable; but we learn that a confessor soliciting a woman in the confessional to immodest actions which are only venial is not to be denounced (vi, 683).

A confessor who, fearing the consequences of refusal, yields to the solicitations of a female penitent, is not to be denounced, "because in truth this confessor did not solicit, but was solicited"! (vi, 687).

A parish priest whose mind is overcome by the impurity of the confessional while hearing confessions, and falls into impurity himself, is not bound to leave his office (iii, 483); unmentionable practices of which any decent person would be heartily ashamed are expressly sanctioned (*ibid.*).

And now, what is to be done with *episcopi sollicitantes*, bishops who solicit female penitents in the confessional? This rather delicate matter causes our unfortunate saint much heart-searching. Imagination boggles at the bare notion of some Right Reverend member of the Athenæum Club incurring such a charge, but in Rome the *episcopus sollicitans* would appear to present quite a problem. The great Escobar

thinks that the amorous prelate ought *not* to be denounced. Liguori examines the authorities carefully, and inclines to the affirmative view, " if the denunciation can be conveniently done " (vi, 685).

All these questions occasion Rome much anxiety, but graver problems remain: *Sed magis dubitatur an clerici, sodomiam patientes, pœnas incurrant.* There is much diversity of opinion among the moral theologians on this point; and their hesitation suggests doubts as to the propriety of the Church posing as a censor of morals. Liguori again, after citing opposing Doctors, decides against the negative opinion.

Pope Innocent XI, in his Proposition 51, says that " a servant who, submitting his shoulders, knowingly assists his own master to ascend by the windows to assault a woman (*ad stuprandam virginem*) and oftentimes (*multoties*) renders him assistance by carrying a ladder, opening a door, or co-operating in some similar fashion, does not sin mortally, if he does this from a fear of notable detriment to himself—for instance, fearing lest he should be badly treated by his master, incur his black looks, or be expelled from his house." Liguori, discussing this edifying problem at considerable length, decides that the butler may lawfully act thus, if he fears serious loss by refusal; and our moral theologian explains this view by a characteristic Jesuit quibble, saying that the butler's co-operation is only material, not formal—which appears, in the eyes of theology, to afford a sufficient justification. The loss apprehended must be notable, and the butler's fear must have reasonable grounds: presumably the fear of dismissal would suffice (ii, 66).

Ought a priest to be denounced who says to a

woman in the confessional, "Remember me, because I love thee from the heart"? "Bordonus excuses him," says Liguori: "I am rather of opinion that the matter is one that should be determined according to circumstances" (*explorandum ex circumstantiis*). It would appear, therefore, that there are occasions when a confessor may be excused for addressing a lady penitent in these ardent terms (vi, 704).

The following is interesting in the present state of Continental affairs. "Catholic sailors and charioteers in Holland, even without great fear, if they have not a depraved intention, may lawfully convey provisions to the camps of heretics, if others are present who," if the Catholics refused, would get the job (ii, 75).

The above-mentioned manservant, under circumstances similar to those already indicated, may harness his master's horse and accompany him to a disorderly house—unless "the master is rendered more bold by his attendance."

The butler may also "convey a concubine in a chariot or sedan chair" (*sede vel curru*). Similarly, sailors and charioteers (*aurigæ*—say, taxi-drivers) may, with the saint's full permission, convey an improper person to her lover, if in fear of notable loss (ii, 64).

A man may, in certain states, let his house to harlots, especially if other tenants are wanting; but the harlots must not seriously annoy the respectable neighbours (*nisi meretrices graviter nocerent vicinis honestis*: ii, 70).

Such, with thousands of other similar ones, are the high matters that occupy Rome's greatest intellects. After reading some hundreds, or it may be thousands, of pages of this offensive drivel one ceases to wonder

at the intellectual and general condition of purely Roman Catholic communities. Should anybody think that I am exaggerating, he has only got to consult Liguori's works for himself: a brief examination will show him that, for obvious reasons, I am understating the case. If I may venture on a "probable," or "æqui-probable," opinion, I should say that Liguori's farrago of filth, falsity, and absurdity is one of the most foolish and pernicious books that ever was written. On the other hand, a "Catholic Truth" pamphleteer talks about the "wonderful charm" of Alphonsus' writings, and asserts that "it is impossible to read one of his works without praying." I cannot honestly say that the *Moral Theology* ever took me that way. Large portions of its two bulky volumes form, in fact, an exhaustive manual of iniquity, much of it quite unique in its revolting nature.

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PRINTED AT
THE COMPLETE PRESS
WEST NORWOOD
LONDON S.E.

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on 20 February, 2020